



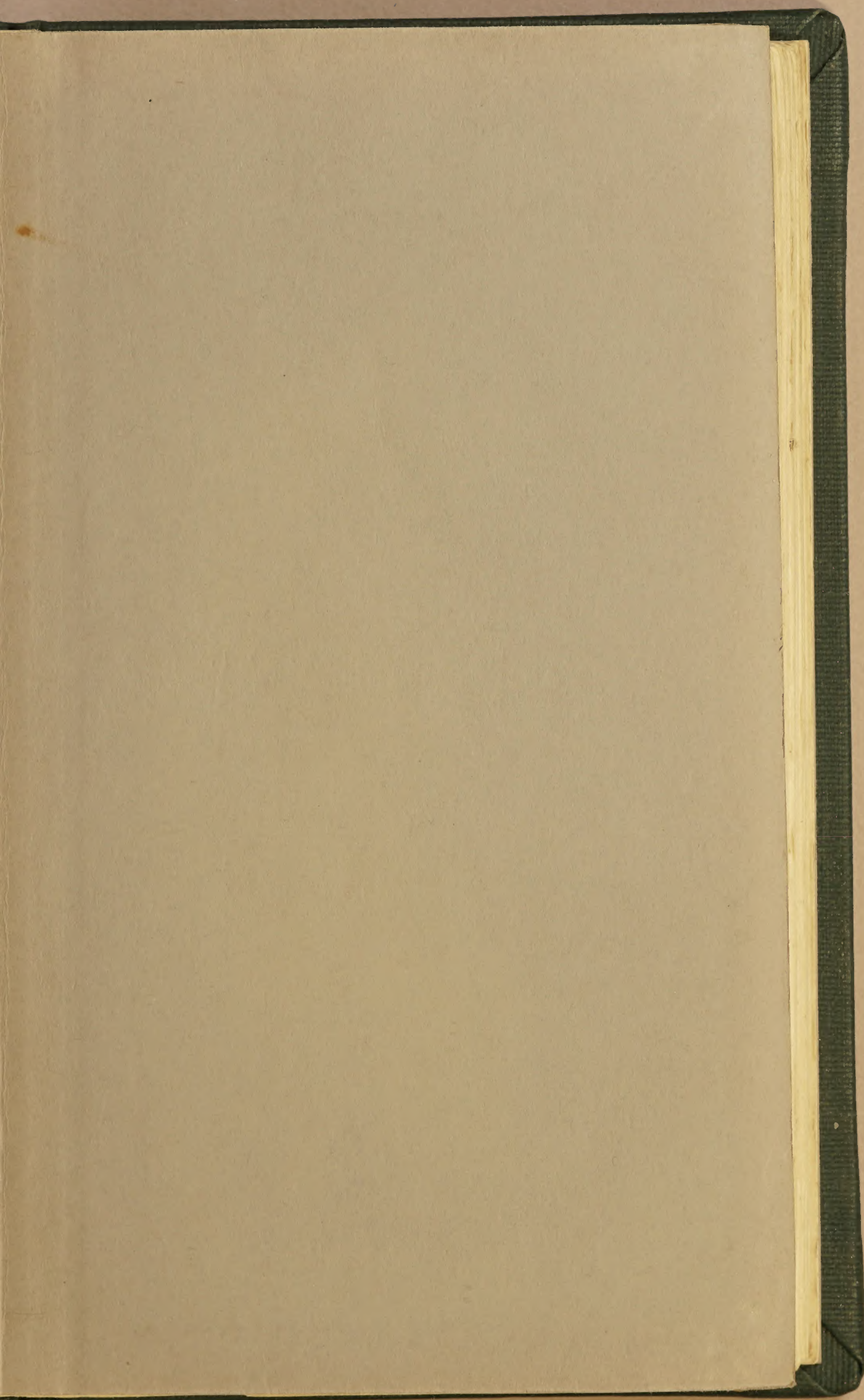
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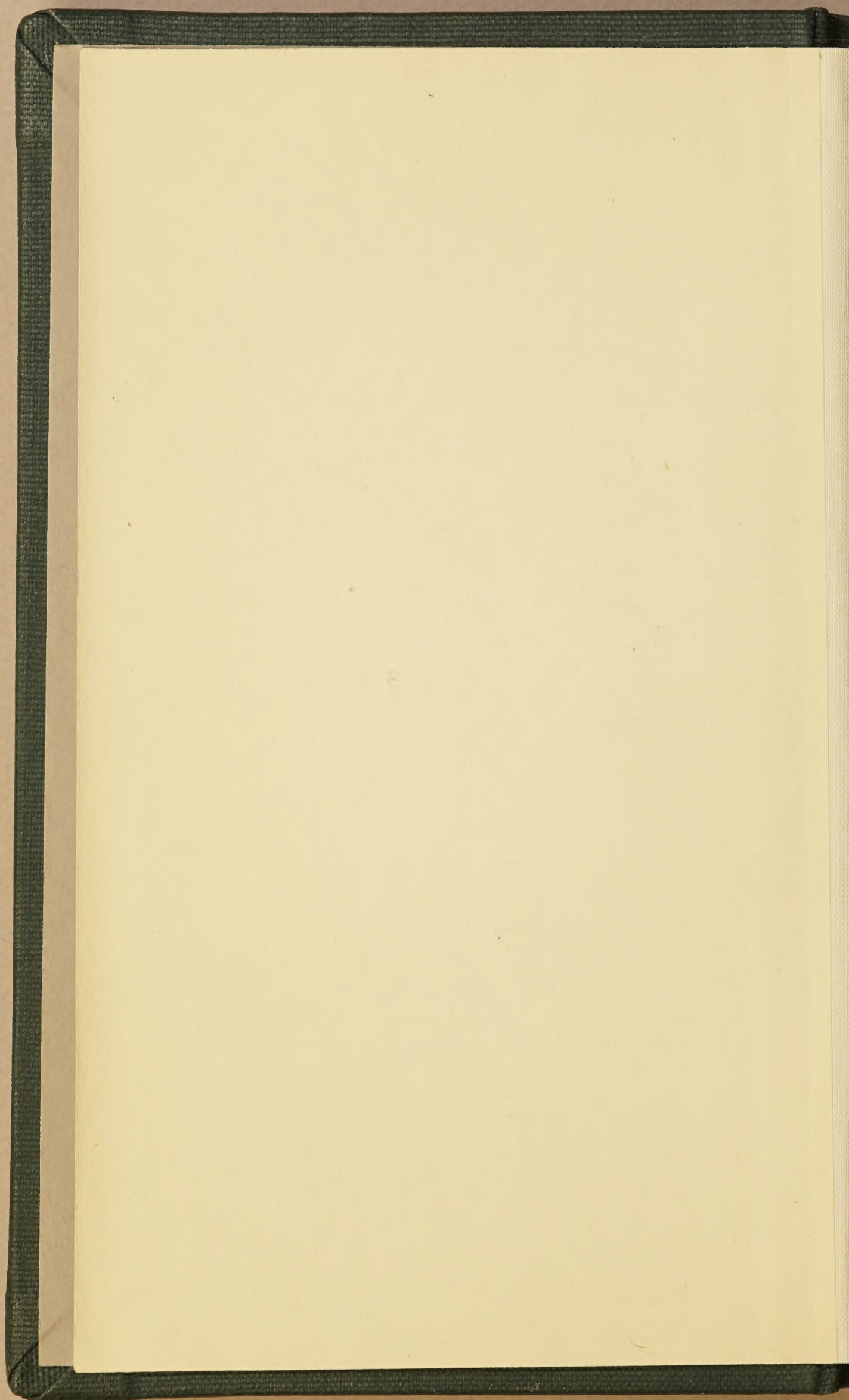


*Bequest of*  
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APRIL 25, 1919—OCTOBER 11, 2005

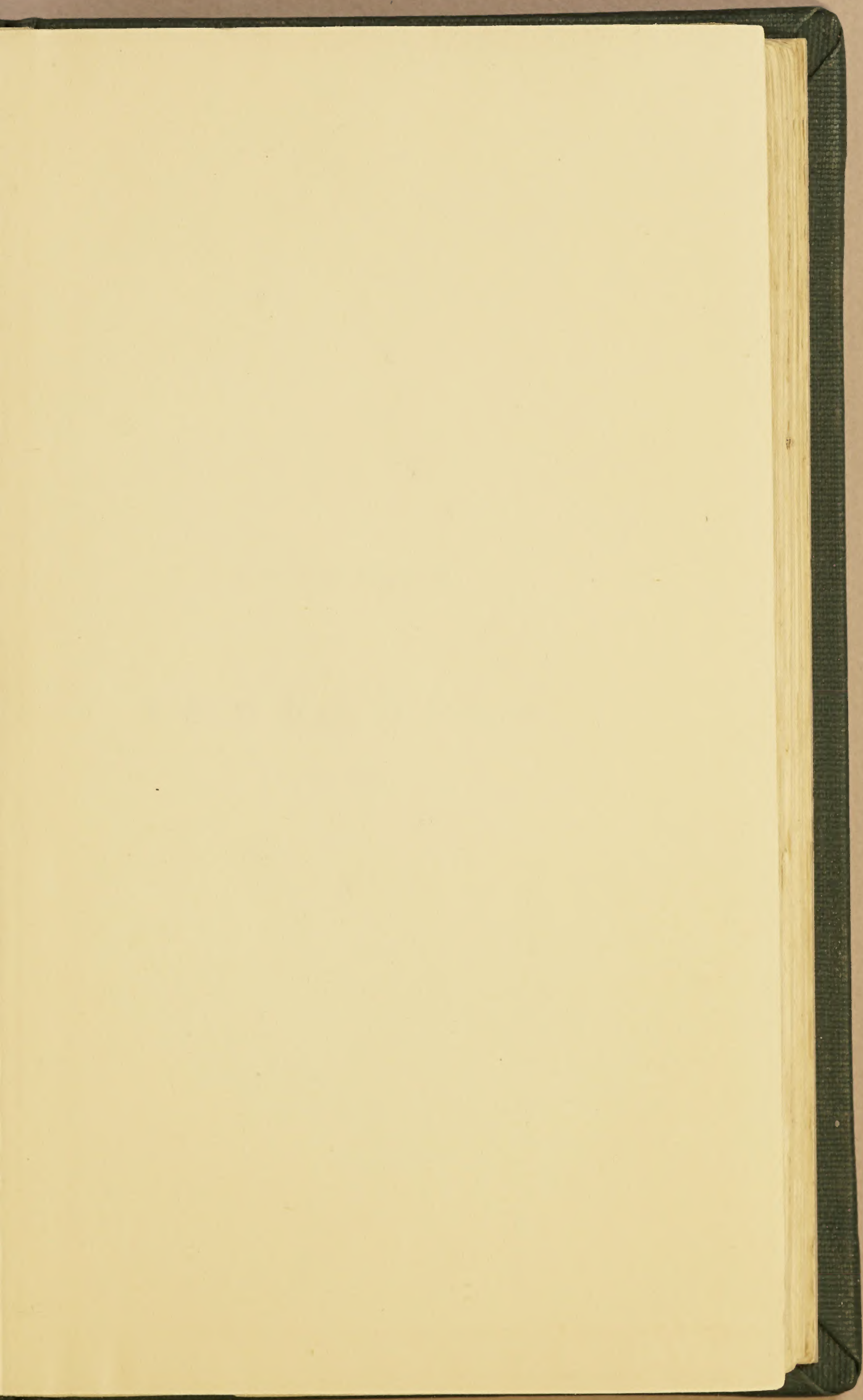




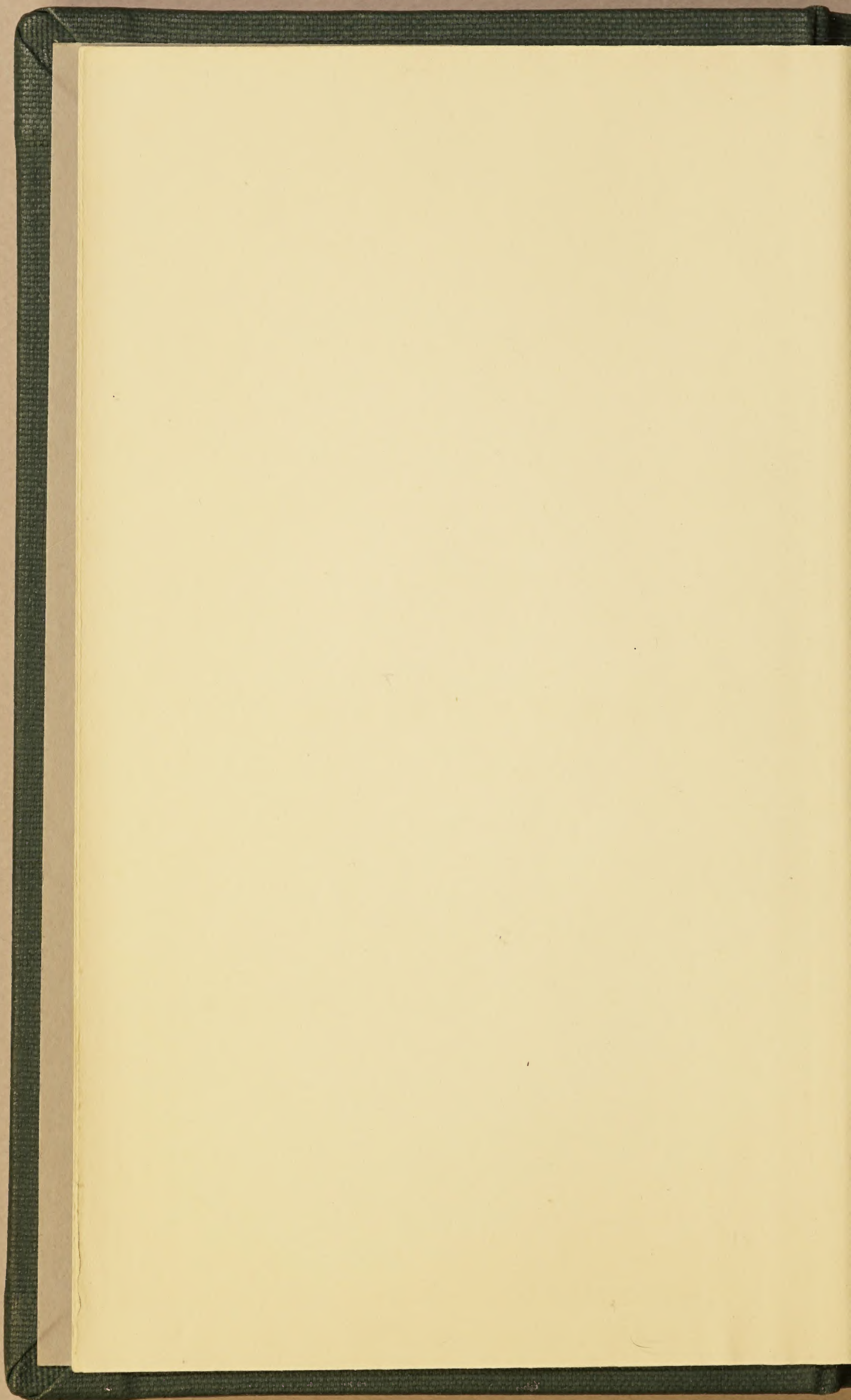














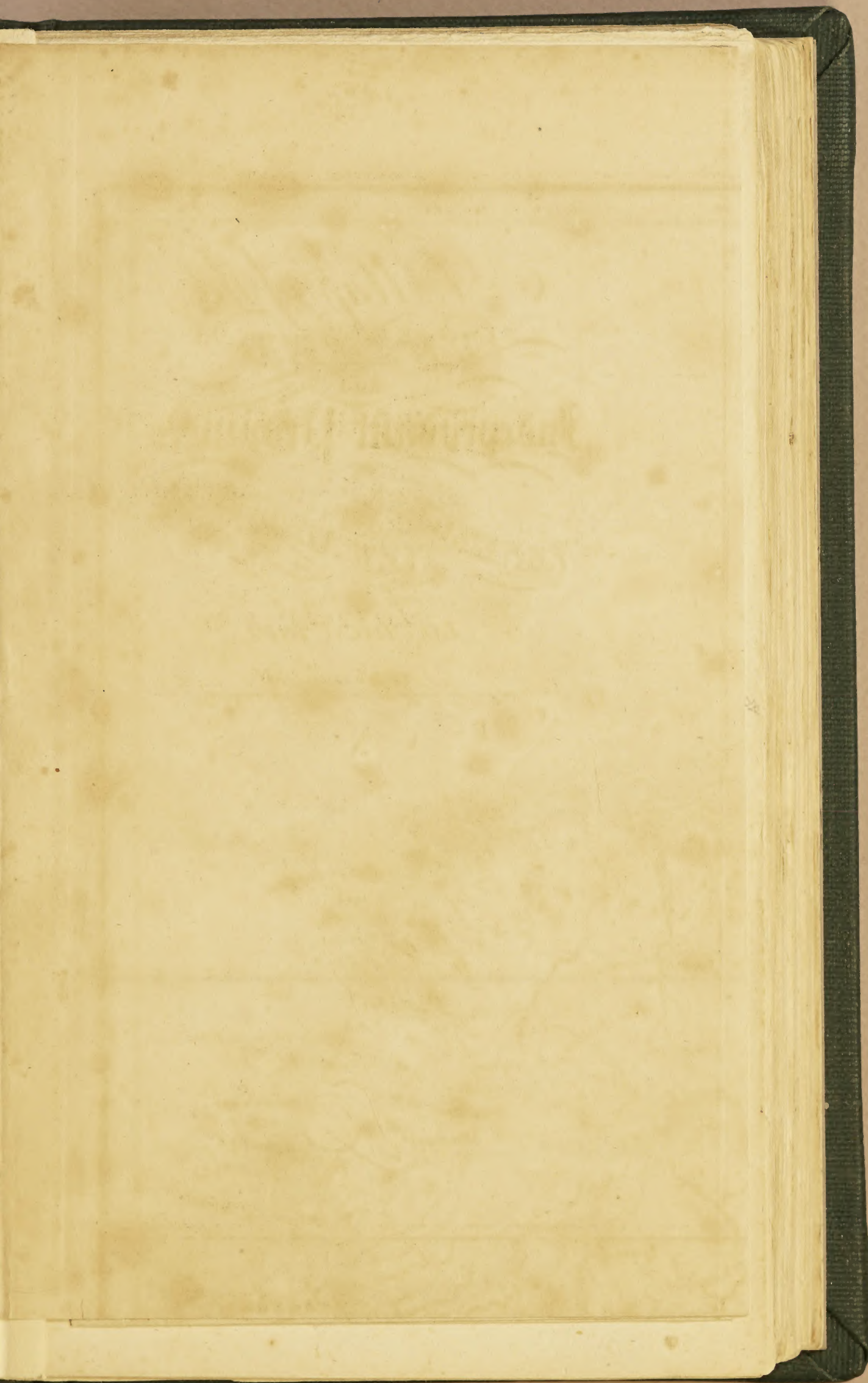
DESCRIPTION  
OF  
VENEZUELA,  
&c. &c.



DESCRIPTION

J. H. BENTLEY











A  
STATISTICAL, COMMERCIAL, AND POLITICAL  
DESCRIPTION  
OF  
**VENEZUELA, TRINIDAD,**  
**MARGARITA, AND TOBAGO :**

CONTAINING  
*Various Anecdotes and Observations,*  
ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE  
PAST AND PRESENT STATE OF THESE INTERESTING COUNTRIES ;

FROM THE FRENCH OF M. LAVAYSSE :

WITH AN

*Jean-François Dawson-Lewis*

INTRODUCTION AND EXPLANATORY NOTES,  
BY THE EDITOR.

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Hic patet ingeniis campus : certusque merenti  
Stat favor : ornatur propriis industria donis !—CLAUDIAN.

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" I leave to your sovereign authority the reform or repeal of all my ordinances, statutes, and decrees ; but I IMPORE YOU TO CONFIRM THE COMPLETE EMANCIPATION OF THE SLAVES, AS I WOULD BEG MY LIFE, OR THE SALVATION OF THE REPUBLIC!!!"

*Installation Speech of General BOLIVAR, Feb. 15th, 1819.*

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LONDON :  
PRINTED FOR G. AND W. B. WHITTAKER,  
13, AVE-MARIA LANE.

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1820.



W. Shackell, Printer,  
Johnson's-court,  
Fleet-street, London.



TO  
MAJOR GENERAL D'EVEREUX,  
*&c. &c.*

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MY DEAR GENERAL,

HAD a personal visit to the wonderful regions of which the following pages treat, put it in my power to submit to the public the result of my inquiries, in an original work, the friendly regard with which you honour me, might, perhaps, dispose you to receive my humble efforts as an author with a more partial but less merited indulgence; I feel persuaded, however, that in requesting your permission to inscribe the first English edition of M. Lavaysse's performance with your name, I shall not only contribute, in a far greater degree, to the introduction among our countrymen of a just notion respecting the moral and political



condition of Venezuela, but also lend a still more effectual aid to the great cause, to which you have so generously dedicated your splendid talents, and the whole of a considerable fortune.

It having been my object in the few remarks which are prefixed to the translation, to demonstrate, with what a capricious deviation from the true principles of a sound policy, and how little consonant with the characteristic liberality and well known feelings of the British nation, is the suspicious neutrality to which ministers profess their determination to adhere, whilst the contest between the brave, but much enduring people of Spanish America, and their imbecile though remorseless oppressors continues undecided; I will not presume to detain you here with any, on a subject of such various and complicated bearings, but beg leave to tender you the tribute of my sincere and fervent admiration at your glorious resolution to unite your political destiny to that of a BOLIVAR, who, in sacrificing a large patrimony on the altar of his country's freedom, and in spontaneously liberating fifteen



hundred slaves on his own extensive estates, has held out a sublime example to the Patriots of every country, and transcended the illustrious WASHINGTON, not less in genuine philanthropy, than in disinterested patriotism!

In full confidence that the gallant and well appointed band which has recently left our shores, will, under your skilful auspices, insure to the standard of the INDEPENDENTS an increase to that long series of brilliant victories which has already crowned their arms; and with every heartfelt wish that, in witnessing the early accomplishment of the benevolent designs of a gracious Providence in favour of the new world, you may reap the appropriate reward of your noble enthusiasm and magnanimous self-devotion,

I have the honour to be

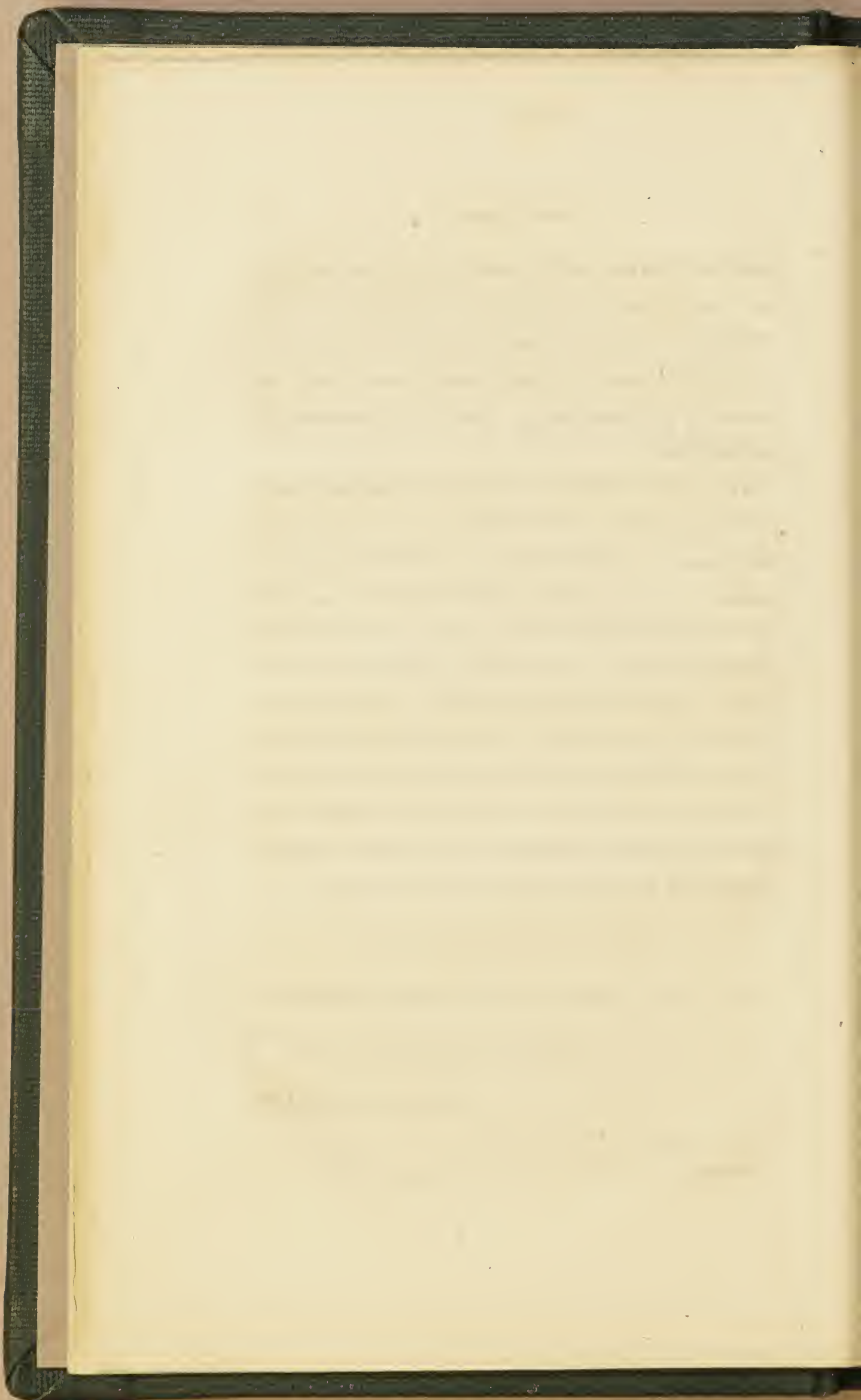
Your very affectionate friend,

And ever devoted servant,

THE EDITOR.

*London,*  
*November 15th, 1819.*







## INTRODUCTION BY THE EDITOR.

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AMONGST those who have described that portion of Spanish South America, which has recently become the theatre of such agitating and important scenes, few had better opportunities of prosecuting inquiries connected with the political economy and commercial resources of Venezuela and the islands in its vicinity, than M. Lavaysse, who resided fifteen years in the West Indies, and was latterly a landed proprietor at Trinidad, whence he paid frequent visits to the opposite continent.

A desire of rendering the work more acceptable to his English readers, has induced the Editor to make some trifling change in the original arrangement, and also to omit those passages which were either irrelevant to the main object, or only calculated to swell out the volume to an unnecessary size. Of these omissions, the author's account of the unfortunate transactions which occurred at Trinidad, from the period of its capture in 1797, until the removal of Sir Thomas Picton, is the only one worthy of being noticed in this place; and of them it is scarcely requisite to say, that having been discussed to satiety in



the united kingdom, it could have answered no useful purpose, to encumber the present edition with a recurrence to those painful and shocking details. In deploring events that will, it is sincerely to be hoped, never disturb the peace or retard the prosperity of that valuable colony again, the Editor cannot well be charged with a disposition to suppress the author's statement on the subject; as, according to an assertion of M. Lavaysse, they have been treated at much greater length, and with more pointed severity in the Annual Register, European Magazine, and daily journals of 1803, and the following year, than by himself. With respect to the persecution of which he occasionally complains, it is needless to remind the author, that the tribunals of this country were as open to him as they have been to others; although in making the above remark, the present writer is fully aware of the extreme difficulty generally attendant on bringing such trials to a satisfactory issue, even under the most favourable circumstances. A strong bias of national jealousy, aggravated by a sense of injuries, whether real or imaginary, has evidently stimulated our traveller's pen in some parts of his book, and hence it was no easy portion of the editorial task to qualify the author's expressions, by divesting them of that acrimonious turn, which is never essential to the support of truth. Anxiously intent upon elucidating his subject, the Editor trusts, that the manner in which he has



acquitted himself in this respect, will equally exempt him from the charge of partiality or prejudice.

Having thus briefly alluded to M. Lavaysse, and to his own views in undertaking the translation, the Editor feels that he would but imperfectly discharge the most important part of the obligations which he has imposed on himself, were he to suffer this occasion to pass without adverting to the momentous question of South American independence. True it is, he cannot dare to hope that any remarks he is capable of making, will give the faintest impulse to the grand efforts which are now accelerating the final emancipation of that immense continent from the tyranny of those, whom the blind and fatal policy of Europe still permits to prolong its desolation and wretchedness.

Without going back to inquire how so large a portion of the new world could have remained subject to the galling yoke, and infuriate bigotry of Spain, during a period of three centuries, it will be sufficient for our present purpose to observe, that, no sooner had the sanguinary wars, and consequent calamities which visited Europe from the commencement of the revolution, pointed out the necessity of liberating the Spanish colonies from the system of oppression and exclusion established by the mother country, than the ministers of Great Britain, with Mr. Pitt at their head, were the first to proclaim to the peo-



ple of Venezuela, that the time had at length arrived for asserting those rights of which they were so cruelly deprived; and moreover, that his majesty was prepared to afford them every assistance in shaking off the chains of tyranny! As the solemn pledge then given, is still in force, for it was of a nature not to be superseded by any subsequent engagements, and calls more loudly than ever for fulfilment on our part; the Editor cannot do better than present it to his readers in the following extract of a despatch from Mr. Dundas, the Secretary of State, addressed to Sir Thomas Picton, Governor of Trinidad, by whom it was most industriously circulated throughout Venezuela and New Grenada.

“ WITH REGARD TO THE HOPES YOU ENTERTAIN OF RAISING THE SPIRITS OF THOSE PERSONS WITH WHOM YOU ARE IN CORRESPONDENCE, TOWARDS ANIMATING THE INHABITANTS TO RESIST THE OPPRESSIVE AUTHORITY OF THEIR GOVERNMENT, I have little more to say, than that they may be certain, that whenever they are in that disposition, they may receive at your hands all the succours to be expected from His Britannic Majesty; be it with forces, or with arms and ammunition to any extent: with the assurance that the views of His Britannic Majesty go no further than to secure to them their independence, without pretending to any sovereignty over their country, nor even to interfere in the privileges of the



people, nor in their political, civil, or religious rights."—

Had the just and beneficent design thus generously evinced been steadily followed up, it is more than probable that many of those embarrassments which now weigh so heavily on the commercial interests of the country would never have been created, while numerous and important advantages must have accrued from a maintenance of good faith with those whom we had so positively promised to support.

Although the Editor is willing to draw a veil over the circumstances connected with the sad story of Miranda and his companions in arms, history will not be silent on the fate of that brave but unfortunate general. Suppressing those feelings of regret or indignation to which a reference to such events irresistibly give rise, he trusts though late, a recollection of them may stimulate the friends and followers of Mr. Pitt, to adopt measures of atonement, while they are yet in office, and before the required succours proceed from others who are much less deeply interested in the existing struggle than ourselves.

Notwithstanding the disastrous result of our first feeble efforts in favour of the patriot cause in Venezuela, they were still anxious to avail themselves of British protection, and no greater

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\* For the whole of this memorable document, which was signed THOMAS PICTON, and dated Port Spain, June 26th, 1797, see the official papers at the end of the volume.



proof of this desire can be adduced, than the famous letter addressed to our venerable sovereign by the junta of Caraccas on the 1st of June, 1810, in which amongst other passages, those unacquainted with the secret springs and tortuous policy of modern statesmen, would naturally suppose that the following might have produced some effect. "Great Britain by her maritime power, by her political influence, and by the philanthropic views which direct her, is the nation that appears called upon to complete the grand work of confederating the scattered sections of America, and to cause order, concord and rational liberty, to reign therein; and we may venture to say, that nothing would be more worthy of Great Britain, more worthy of the wise government, as well as congenial to the character and personal virtues of your majesty; and that amongst the many transcendent traits which already adorn the history of your memorable reign, none would render this era more brilliant to the eyes of posterity, than the one to which we here allude."

To the above eloquent appeal, no answer whatever was returned! We had already, in defiance of every previous engagement, coalesced with the selfish regency of Cadiz, and guaranteed the colonies to Spain. It is needless minutely to recapitulate the results; but how can the impartial observer who reflects on subsequent events, refrain from deploring that any circumstances, however urgent, could have induced us to abandon



those ill-fated provinces. While, however, a war of extermination, scarcely equalled in the annals of mankind, and in which several hundred thousand human lives have been already sacrificed, has desolated them, we are gleaning the reward of our fatal policy, in the loss of innumerable advantages on the one hand, and the basest ingratitude on the other, from a prince who has done more to render the kingly power odious and unpopular in Europe than two thirds of his imperial and royal contemporaries !

Without being insensible to the extreme delicacy of our present situation, not only as it regards the cabinet of Madrid but that of Washington, a predicament which is most assuredly not the offspring of wisdom, or sound policy, it would be the height of folly to imagine that the indecisive and temporizing plans now pursued, can lead to any thing but still greater embarrassment. The most superficial reasoner amongst us, will not maintain the probability of Venezuela or New Grenada ever returning to the Spanish yoke ; and yet, the project of occupying Cuba, is confidently said to be the secret cause of ministers adhering to the above ruinous system. Although he is far from presuming to be sufficiently versed in the arcana of diplomacy to offer a positive opinion on a subject necessarily so complicated, the Editor is by no means singular in his opinion, that government will encounter more obstacles to the accomplishment of such a plan, if it really is contemplated



than they anticipate ; whereas, should it ever be realized, we may be involved in an unprofitable contest, that will most probably terminate in disappointment, ultimately placing us in the awkward dilemma of adding not only Venezuela but New Grenada, and Mexico, to the number of our enemies!

The necessity and importance of promoting a federal union between the provinces south of Panama and Mexico, is strenuously advocated by the most enlightened politicians of Venezuela and their friends in New Grenada, while the undeviating policy of the North American government renders it self-evident. The whole subject of our interests in this part of the new world, is, in fact, pregnant with such vital consequences to our colonial power and commercial interests, that nothing less than the cruellest fatality, can prevent ministers from taking it into immediate consideration, and adopting those measures in favour of our real friends and natural allies, which every view of the question seems so imperiously to demand.\*

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\* Some days after the above cursory thoughts were committed to paper, the editor met the following curious passage (not a little corroborative of his opinions) in the communication of a Spaniard to the editor of the *Espanol Constitucional*, for May: it is dated Nov. 29th, 1818, from the capital of Mexico. In addition to various strictures on the policy of Ferdinand, and an able exposition of the ambitious views of North America, he concludes by observing—"From my long experience and the knowledge I have of the plans projected in that country, (the United States)



But though ministers should persevere in the present system, which they have so many motives for abandoning; surely there is nothing to prevent the British merchants, a body so often foremost in acts of liberality, from attending to the appeal made to their humanity on one side, and the prospect of immense advantages held out on the other? Unhappily the policy of the cabinet and interests of the merchant are but too frequently separated, nor were they ever more at variance than in this instance. Will it, however, be denied that many capitalists of this country, are in

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I shall not be surprised, if four years pass over our heads without seeing America dominate in Mexico, as she does in the Floridas. With respect to the other provinces which have risen, even if they are consolidated into small republics, the United States will exercise a terrible preponderance over them. God grant that my political prophecy may not be fulfilled; but I cannot help thinking, if you have reflected a little on this grave matter, as I do not doubt you have, that you will agree with my opinion, except as to the period of time given, which is an accidental circumstance in the great problem."

A little farther on he says, "After a forty years residence in America, I had hoped to have descended into the tomb, with the consolation of having left my children, the noble title of Spanish Citizens guaranteed by a constitution framed under the auspices of deputies from both worlds; but, alas! my aged and sorrowful eyes will yet see the great vice-royalty made a prize of, or what is still more degrading, sold like the Floridas to this proud republic, which exceeds that of Rome in ambition."

The reader is earnestly requested to compare the above with Commodore Perry's recent mission to Angostura, not to mention various other indications of a decided change in the policy of the Union.



the daily habit of employing money less advantageously, and with an infinitely smaller chance of a profitable return, than if appropriated to securing the independence of unexceptionably one of the most fertile and productive regions on earth? Well might the Abbé de Pradt, to whom public gratitude is pre-eminently due for his meritorious efforts on the subject of South America during the last twenty years, exclaim; "Let us not dispute the fact, but candidly confess that, as yet, America is only discovered in name, and geographically. The treasures it contains are still buried riches, which its freedom alone can discover to the old world: when we yield to the contemplation of those blessings which the independence of this immense continent will overwhelm the universe; the imagination is sterile to conceive, and language too weak for their description!"\*

When the present prosperous state of the Supreme Chief's affairs, are compared with his heroic constancy during a period of ten years

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\* The following account of the progressive advance in the revenue and produce of New Spain is not a little calculated to favour the above ingenious writer's flattering anticipations.

Total amount in 1712	-	16,000,000 francs.
Do. in 1802	-	100,000,000
Augmentation in ninety years		84,000,000
Crop of cocoa in 1735	65,000 quintals of 150 lbs. each.	
Do. do in 1763	110,650	do.

During the interval between 1763 and 1783, the plains near Caraccas tripled the number of animals they had previously contained.

incessant warfare, against the blood-thirsty Morillo, the Attila of South America, and his sanguinary satellites, the Editor is certainly justified in saying, that the independent governments of Venezuela and New Grenada, are not inferior as securities for the payment of a few millions, to some of the best guarantees held out in the dilapidated financial condition of more than one European nation; particularly, should any of those events anticipated by many political economists ever take place. If, on the other hand, a few liberal-minded men are disposed to risk any part of their capital, surely there is quite as much consolation in doing so for the rescue of a great continent from tyranny and oppression, as if it were sacrificed in any of those private speculations which are daily absorbing the wealth of individuals?\*

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\* A very well written communication that has appeared in the daily papers, and dated from Trinidad, September 2d, contains the following passage, which the Editor is induced to submit to those who entertain any doubts on the subject to which it alludes.

“Of the personal characters of the individuals composing the government I entertain the highest opinion, and every day’s experience and observation confirm its correctness. Every debt that has been contracted, I am confident, will be fully, completely and faithfully discharged; and every delay which may have occurred hitherto, however much to be deplored, cannot in the slightest degree be attributed to want of either inclination or exertion, but to circumstances over which there was no human controul. The best proof which I can give of my perfect reliance on the



Such is the actual state of things, both as to the stability of the government in Venezuela, and the progress of its army, that were a few men of property to combine and take the subject of advancing a loan into their consideration, the Editor feels convinced they would not have to wait many months for a return either in specie or produce, while a comparatively small sum would enable the Supreme Chief to decide the contest during the present or ensuing campaign at farthest. In suggesting the propriety of an association like the above, it is superfluous to remind his generous countrymen, that the self-satisfaction arising out of thus removing an immense portion of human

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honour and good faith of the Government of Venezuela, is, the fact, that I and my friends are continuing our advances; and I declare most solemnly, that had I the power I would go almost any lengths. The debts owing by this country are comparatively a mere bagatelle, and which the possession of New Grenada, and a short repose, will easily liquidate.

“The patriotic cause never wore so favourable an aspect as at present, and the complete emancipation of these beautiful countries may be speedily anticipated.”

“What an act of philanthropy, were the British Government to interfere, and put an end to this inhuman warfare; for whatever the result of this or any other campaign may be, America is lost for ever to Spain! This beautiful country may be rendered a desert, but never, never will it be brought to submit to the yoke of Ferdinand: the continuation of the conflict can produce nothing but a useless shedding of human blood. The interference of Great Britain would rivet the chains of amity and attachment which already exist, while from the situation and nature of the two countries no rivalry can ever arise betwixt them.”

misery, liberating a continent, and securing considerable pecuniary advantages, would far exceed that which springs from the success of an ordinary speculation.

Here it is but performing a common act of justice to observe, that the persevering exertions of General D'Evereux, have produced the most salutary effects, not only as they regard the patriot cause, but also in favour of our commerce. By directing the attention of mercantile men to a most profitable market, he has at the same time snatched many a brave veteran from the evils of poverty and wretchedness, which have weighed so heavily on our disbanded soldiers and seamen since the peace of 1814. By a most fortunate coincidence, the period at which these laudable exertions are making, combined with the generous manner in which the nobility and gentry of Ireland, not excepting its women of rank and fortune, have seconded the general's views, a considerable portion of that odium which naturally resulted from a late most impolitic act, has been removed. With respect to those delays which have somewhat retarded the plans of the Major General in favour of humanity and our commercial prosperity, they have originated in causes over which he had no controul, and cannot be so acutely felt on the part of his brave followers as by himself. Having understood that those busy meddlers, who are ever ready to mar the best interests of society, without hesitating to depreciate private character,



are not idle on the present occasion, the Editor pledges himself, that the most satisfactory explanations will be given on the whole of General D'Evereux's patriotic proceedings, which have a far different and infinitely more exalted aim than have those of too many of his contemporaries in the same sacred cause.\*

These remarks, intended to convince those who have already made any advances to the independent government, that they have nothing to apprehend in the future, and with the hope of exciting others to complete the work of humanity, cannot close more appropriately than by quoting the passage in the Supreme Chief's celebrated speech during the recent installation of Congress at Angostura, in which, alluding to the foreign creditors of the republic, he observes, "Those friends of mankind are the guardian geniuses of America, and to them we owe a debt of eternal gratitude, as well as a religious fulfilment of the

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\* Amongst other ornaments of their country, Messrs. Phillips and Finlay, two of the most eloquent men at the Irish bar, or perhaps any other in Europe, have been particularly distinguished in this generous emulation to second the Major General's benevolent and laborious efforts. But the Editor cannot omit this opportunity of declaring, that the oratory of Mr. Curran's able biographer is, in his humble opinion, infinitely more brilliant and persuasive, when contending for the emancipation of our Catholic countrymen, and asserting the liberties of Ireland and South America; than while giving countenance or support to the *pious* members of Bible Societies in the British Metropolis!

several obligations contracted with them. The national debt, legislators, is the deposit of the good faith, the honour and the gratitude of Venezuela: respect it as the holy ark which encloses not only the rights of our benefactors, but the glory of our fidelity. Let us perish rather than fail, in any the smallest point, connected with the completion of those engagements, which have been the salvation of our country, and of the lives of her children!"

In having thus endeavoured, however ineffectually, to persuade the ministers of this country into an act of common justice, and at the same time convince the mercantile interest of a measure that would ere long prove eminently advantageous to both, let it not be imagined that the Editor supposes the cause of South American freedom depends altogether on either.—The triumphant manner in which the Supreme Chief may now be said to have almost terminated his glorious labours, would render such a belief exceedingly irrational. Although so tardy in coming forward many years after they were bound to support the sister continent, our commercial rivals in North America seem to have at length awakened to a sense of their interest in this great cause. Here, the Editor is anxious to record, that he attributes no part of their conduct during the struggle either to national generosity or public virtue! on the contrary, every part of it appears to have been the offspring of a cold calculating trading policy on



the one hand, not unmixed with an ill concealed sentiment of envy and jealousy on the other. But while there does not appear to be any motive for the latter feeling, the cabinet of Washington has certainly every reason to be envious of a neighbouring state, in which UNIVERSAL LIBERTY is proclaimed, while slavery is tolerated throughout the incessantly vaunted republic of North America!

If the Editor has dwelt on this subject somewhat longer than he intended, it arises from a conviction that the recitals of disappointed adventures, and representations of those who are ever ready to palliate the errors of men in power, have had the effect of prejudicing many of our capitalists on the subject of Venezuela. Leaving those publications which draw so lamentable a picture of the hardships experienced by two or three isolated individuals and their companions, hardships which the Editor ventures to assert have been felt by thousands and tens of thousands, during the late disastrous wars in which this country was engaged, to that oblivion which awaits them, he takes this opportunity of noticing a writer in the last number of a well known Review, and of shortly replying to his strictures on the cause of independence. In these, amongst other equally *liberal* remarks it is asserted that, "South America is nothing but an arena in which a set of needy and adventurous prize fighters are contending each for his own individual advantage." Upon such

an assertion, and indirect mode of defending government, the Editor has no hesitation in observing that, so far from exonerating ministers from the charge of betraying the patriots, it is a gross exaggeration of the crimes laid to our account by the independent party in that long persecuted region. But this is not the only instance wherein the advocates of a bad cause, instead of justifying their patrons, only tend to bring them into still greater contempt, and hasten the accomplishment of those events they vainly endeavour to retard. Does the writer thus noticed, merely because the above periodical work is not only patronized by ministers, but partly conducted by members of the administration, require to be informed that, if his assertion with respect to South America were even true, every honest mind could most easily trace the cause to those statesmen who, after having invited the colonists to shake off the yoke, and solemnly promised every assistance, abandoned them to their fate!!!

In answer to the absurd proposition that the great mass of the inhabitants take little or no interest in the struggle, and which not only past experience, but these events daily announced most effectually controvert, the Editor begs to quote a passage from M. de Humboldt's Essay on New Spain, which accounts in a great measure for many of those difficulties that have impeded the termination of this terrible contest.



“Notwithstanding the tranquil character and extreme docility of the people in the Spanish colonies,” says that intelligent traveller; “in spite of their peculiar situation, dispersed over a vast extent of country, enjoying that species of individual liberty which always arises from great liveliness, political agitations would have been more frequent after the peace of Versailles, and above all since 1789, if the mutual hatred of the casts, and the fears with which the great number of blacks and Indians inspire the whites, had not arrested the progress of popular discontent. These motives have become still more powerful, subsequent to the events that have taken place in St. Domingo; and it cannot be for a moment doubted, that they have contributed more to preserve peace in the Spanish colonies, than measures of rigour or the formation of militias.”—When to the foregoing causes we add the influence of the priesthood, and power of the inquisition; the superstitious and unenlightened state of the people, not to mention the efforts those in power are ever ready to make for the preservation of their patronage, emoluments and places, the wonder will greatly diminish if it be not entirely removed. Amongst those consequences anticipated by the best informed individuals, from the European cabinets thus tacitly encouraging the war of extermination, that of the black population being stimulated to follow the example of St. Domingo, is not the least important or wor-

thy the serious consideration of our statesmen, as being fraught with the most imminent dangers to our colonial interests.

Without entering into a defence of such men as Puyerdon, St. Martin, O'Higgins and Artigas ; all of whom are embraced by the sweeping charge of the Reviewer ; the best reply to his strictures, as well as those suggested by the hatred and malignity of others, will be found in the late proceedings at Angostura, where General BOLIVAR, in opening the second National Congress, previous to a most eloquent speech, in which the basis of a final constitution is proposed, insisted on giving up that unlimited authority with which he had been entrusted by the people ; in directing the secretaries of state to lay the whole of his proceedings before the representatives of the nation, and finally consigning the staff of office to the President. When this had been done the General nobly added, " I return to the Republic the general's staff, entrusted to me: to serve in whatever rank or class the congress may place me, cannot but be honourable ; in it I shall give an example of that subordination and blind obedience, which ought to characterize every soldier of the Republic."

The speech from which the above is extracted, together with an account of the proceedings that took place on the 15th of February, a proud day for Venezuela, marks a memorable epoch in the history of the new republic : it has been published under the auspices of General D'Evereux, and is



particularly deserving the attention of all those who feel an interest in the present progress of events. It is not amongst the least extraordinary political phenomena of the nineteenth century, to witness a military chief imitating the most exalted men of antiquity, and promulgating the sublimest legislative truths, in a country hitherto signalized as the very focus of bigotry and despotism!—expressing sentiments which the people of Europe, chiefly know through the too partial medium of Grecian and Roman history; as if the principles recently advocated by the friends of human nature in the old world, were destined to be practically realized in the western hemisphere! But this is not the first time the Genius of Liberty has crossed the Atlantic. With the most ardent wishes to see her cherished by the sons of Southern Columbia, let us however hope that she has not totally abandoned her votaries in Europe!

Yes! even at this moment, the situation of SIMON BOLIVAR might well be envied by the greatest monarchs on earth. Hailed a second time as the LIBERATOR of Santa Fé de Bogota; having previously merited the same glorious title, were the Editor disposed to hazard comparisons between public characters, how pre-eminently transcendent would not a chief whose glory and fortunes are of his own creation, achieved through unparalleled difficulties, and fighting for the liberties of his country, appear, over those who, having sworn to defend popular rights, are only

coalescing for their destruction, and endeavouring to degrade the species by adding to the weight of their fetters!

Although a summary of the speech to which the Editor has felt it his duty to call the attention of his readers, will be found in the Appendix, he hopes to be excused for closing these observations called forth by the illiberal attempts of a few individuals to lessen the Supreme Chief's well merited claims to the admiration of this country, with the last paragraph of his luminous address, which, though drawing a picture that may not be realized to the extent anticipated, still does infinite honour to the head and heart of the illustrious orator. "Flying from present and approaching future times," said the General, "my imagination plunges into future ages, in which I observe with admiration and amazement, the prosperity, the splendour and animation which this vast region will have acquired;—my ideas are wafted on, and I see my beloved native land in the centre of the universe expanding herself on her extensive coasts, between those oceans, which nature has separated, and which our country will have divided with large and spacious canals; I see her the bond, and central emporium of the human race; I see her transmitting to earth's remotest bounds, those treasures contained in her mountains of gold and silver; I see her distributing by her salutiferous plants, health and life to the afflicted of the old world; I see her impart-



ing to the sages of other regions her inestimable secrets, ignorant until then, how much her height of knowledge transcends her excessive wealth; --yes! I see her seated on the throne of FREEDOM, wielding the sceptre of justice, and crowned with glory, shew the old world the majesty of the new!"

A cursory perusal of the documents prefixed to the end of the volume, while it demonstrates upon what enlightened principle the new government is founded, equally removed from the violence of democracy on the one hand, and from the danger of arbitrary power on the other, proves that a system of equal laws, like those even now in force, and solemnly promised by the representatives of the people, must prevent the abuses which daily arise in the best regulated communities of Europe. If sentiments such as those expressed in the declaration of independence, and in the Supreme Chief's late installation speech, are not calculated to excite admiration and inspire confidence, where are they to be found? And let it be recorded to the honour of General BOLIVAR, they have been rigidly acted upon, in all that relates to the government of the Republic, since he has been called to the arduous office he now fills with no less credit to himself than advantage to his country.

The late Congress at Aix la Chapelle, from the labours of which so many benefits were anticipated by some people, was also to have arranged

the affairs of South America, and thrown that vast continent open to the industry and commerce of the old world. But what was the result of its deliberations on that vitally important subject? The august members separated without one solitary measure calculated to inspire the oppressed colonists with hope, or change the infatuated policy of Ferdinand! What a humiliating reflection, that those who had so often boasted of re-establishing peace on such a solid foundation, should imply their inefficiency to complete the beneficent work, by leaving an immense and fertile continent a prey to war, rapine, and persecution!\*

But it is time to terminate this discussion, which

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\* When the future historian of our times, sits down to record the proceedings of this assemblage, it must be truly painful for him to state that, with such a glorious opportunity of performing acts of real magnanimity, and restoring their lost popularity, as no other Congress ever possessed, its measures were exclusively confined to an act of necessary duty, that of withdrawing the foreign armies from France, concerting the best means of adding to their power and increasing their territories!

Would it not have been more conducive to the interests of humanity and beneficial to themselves, had those Sovereigns opened the vast continent of South America to the industry and enterprize of their starving subjects, giving it that independence which must eventually triumph even without their aid? Ought they to have been indifferent to the laudable efforts of the philanthropic OWEN to ameliorate the condition of the species; much less deaf and insensible to the appeal of the virtuous Count de Las



has already far exceeded the proposed limits. Unambitious, as he is undeserving of literary fame, the Editor has, in the foregoing desultory remarks, been rather anxious to quote official documents, and record the opinions of more weighty authorities than his own; thus hoping to make out a case in favour of the brave and suffering people of South America, which neither sophistry nor declamation, ridicule nor invective, could well controvert. Relying on the indulgent consideration of his country, it is for an impartial public to decide how far those important objects have been attained. If he has trespassed somewhat longer on the patience of his readers than might be thought necessary, he trusts their recollection of those countless millions in both worlds, whose best interests are either directly or collaterally involved in the momentous question of South

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CASAS in favour of his persecuted but once powerful master!

Although the advocates of injustice and arbitrary power in this country affect to forget, and are silent on our treatment of NAPOLEON, the hero of Tilsit, of Elau and Esling; the conqueror of Vienna, the preserver of Frederick William's throne, the sworn friend of the *magnanimous* Alexander, finally of the Emperor and former enemy of England, who claimed *British hospitality* when overtaken by misfortune; that treatment is not the less inhuman and impolitic, or likely to become a serious ITEM of accusation against its authors and abettors, when the day of civil and political retribution arrives!

American independence, will be accepted as a sufficient excuse for a greater want of brevity.

Should the feeble voice he has endeavoured to raise with the best intentions and most ardent desire to serve the cause of England and humanity, not be heard, he ventures to express a hope, that the walls of Parliament will resound with such an appeal in favour of the violated rights of men in the new world, that, while it convinces Europe, the British nation does not participate either in the wishes or designs of its ministers; shall finally lead to the accomplishment of those salutary measures which neither the Congress of Emperors and Kings, nor the servants of the crown, have had sufficient magnanimity to perform.

Without wishing to divert the attention of the legislature from objects of still greater consequence nearer home, or diminish the awful, nay, almost unprecedented circumstances under which it is about to assemble, the Editor feels satisfied that the subject of South America is one of paramount importance; he is moreover induced to add as his firm conviction, that if there is any event connected with our foreign policy, more likely to calm the perturbed spirit of the people than another, or one that would give a most salutary impulse to manufactures and commerce, government would find it in a prompt and liberal measure, such as sound policy dictates and our situation really calls for, with regard to that continent.



It has been recently announced in the public papers, that twelve of the Englishmen surprized at Portobello, have been shot by the Spanish authorities at Panama. If this atrocious act be confirmed, the Editor trusts, for the honour of our name as a people, that the circumstance of these unfortunate victims having been led in an evil hour, or perhaps by the dreadful pecuniary embarrassment now so prevalent in our once happy country, to follow the fortunes of an adventurer, who has justly forfeited public confidence, will not save the perpetrators from the just vengeance of ENGLAND; and that unlike the recent conduct of her ministers, in suffering the sanguinary generals of North America to slaughter our ill-fated countrymen in cold blood, the solitary abettors and murderous instruments of Ferdinand in South America, will not also be allowed to act with similar impunity!

E. B.

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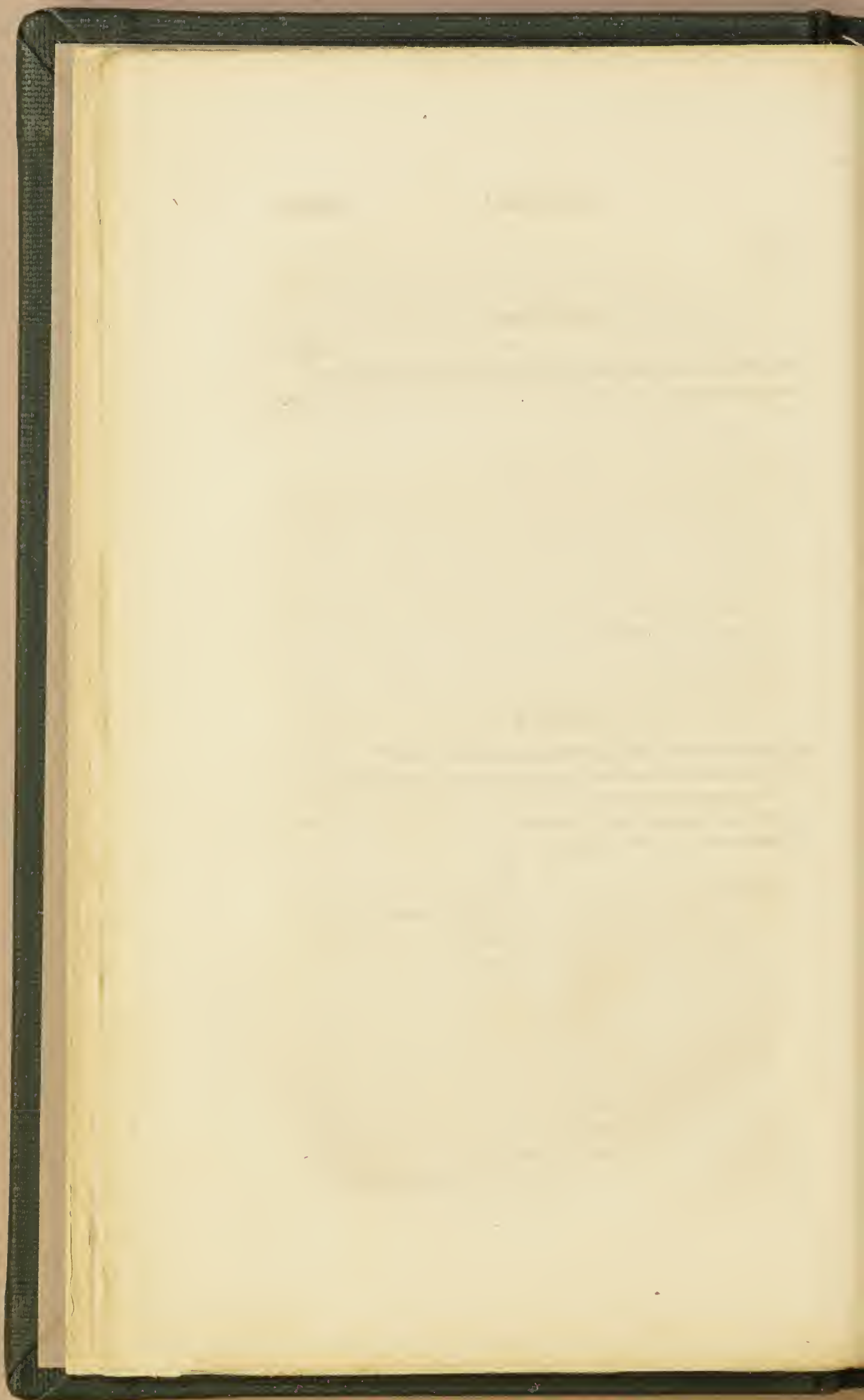
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ERRATA.

- Page 1, *for* "Wall" in heading to Chap. *read* "Gual," p. 23.  
.... 3, *for* "accomplished for the degradation of humanity" *read* "could  
effect for," &c.  
.... 69, *for*, "in which" *read* "where."  
.... 120, *for* "Caoni," *read* "Caroni."





## DESCRIPTION OF VENEZUELA,

&c.

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Historical Sketch of Venezuela.—First Adventurers.—Welsers.—Their Cruelties.—Depopulation amongst the Indian Tribes.—Early Commerce, and Pearl Fishery.—Exclusive Commercial Companies.—Views of the BRITISH Ministers.—PIERNEL, WALL, and ESPANA.—Don Vincente de EMPARAN.—Anecdote.—General Miranda.—Geographical Description of the Country.—Rivers, Lakes, Population, Vallies of Cape de Paria.—Caraccas.—State of Religion and Education.—La Guyra.—Porto Cavello.—Valencia.—Maracay.—CORO.—Barquisimeto.—San Felipe.—Guanare.—Miraculous Madonas.—Curious Law Suit.—Nirgoa.—Zamboes.—Conjectures.—Calabosa.

THE vast, fine, fertile, and generally picturesque country, of which I am about to sketch the history and description, was discovered by Christopher Columbus, during his third voyage to the new world in 1498. All that this great man related to the court of Spain, relative to the beauty and riches of the regions he had discovered, excited the cupidity of two adventurers, his cotemporaries, Americo Vespucci and Alfonso Ojeda: in consequence of which, they obtained permission from the Spanish



Government to glean on his track. These men united in this enterprise, like two traders on a commercial speculation. The noble mind of Columbus was only animated by a love of the sciences and true glory; while Ojeda and Vespucci were stimulated by the desire of acquiring riches, no matter by what means. It is not therefore surprising, that the last named personage attempted to persuade, and at length succeeded in convincing the court of Spain, that the discovery of the new continent was due to him, and that Columbus had merely discovered some islands. In almost every age, audacious adventurers have obtained more success at courts than men of real genius; but it is not the less surprising, that although the deceit of Vespucci was soon discovered, his name should be given to, and still remains with the new world. It was destined, that the man who made the greatest and most brilliant of discoveries, who was the cause of reclaiming so large a portion of the human species from the forests of barbarism, and of laying the foundations of numerous states and colonies; it was decreed that this truly great man should be calumniated and persecuted during his life, that his glory should be contested, and even his name mutilated. Historians are justly indignant at this injustice of his contemporaries; but many think it fortunate for the pure and unspotted glory of Columbus, that his name has not been borne by a portion of the

world which was to be made the theatre of all that avarice and superstition, tyranny and slavery, have accomplished for the degradation of humanity. When, however, those objects now so gloriously contending for, are accomplished, and this country attains its proper rank among the mightier powers, it would be worthy of its inhabitants, to give it the name of COLUMBIA, and that the usurped trading name of America should be effaced from their maps. When in August, 1806, General Miranda made his first attempt to render Venezuela, his native country, an independent state, he conceived the noble idea of giving to the little band which he commanded at Coro, the name of the Columbian army, and proposed that his countrymen should take the name of Columbians.

Alfonso Ojeda reconnoitred the Lake of Maracaibo in 1499, and having found the villages of the natives built on piles, he gave the country the name of Venezuela, from its similitude to Venice. He did not found any settlement there, but spent his time in waging war with the natives, whom he took to sell as slaves in the island of Saint Domingo and Porto Rico.

It does not enter into the present plan, to write a history of the plunders, massacres and cruelties committed in all those countries, soon after their discovery, calamities of which the original cause may be traced to the permission granted by Charles V. to those ruthless robbers of a barbar-



ous age, who went to conquer the new world, and enslave the natives. A man who had naturally a benevolent heart, and who was animated with the true spirit of the gospel, the virtuous Bishop of Chiapa, had the glory of restraining those excesses, and of shielding the Indians from their executioners. He also was calumniated; but the good which he effected remains, and his name, an honour to that of Spain, will descend to the remotest posterity among those of the most illustrious heroes of humanity.

Previous to my giving a description of the province of Venezuela, it may be proper to present a short historical view of the government of the Welsers, bankers at Augsburg, to whom Charles V. had ceded the country as an hereditary fief of the crown of Spain. The young colony was then governed by a prudent and worthy chief, Don Juan Ampues, who had founded the town of Coro, in 1529, the most ancient establishment in Venezuela except Cumana, built in 1520, by Gonzalo Ocampo, and which did not form a part of that government.

The conditions on which this important cession was made, were as follows :

First. All the countries comprised between Cape de la Vela, and Maracapana, with the privilege of making conquests, and extending their possessions towards the south, were ceded to the new company.

Second. The Welsers obliged themselves to found two towns, and three forts, in the space of three years.

Third. They were to equip four vessels for the conveyance of three hundred Spaniards, and fifty Germans, and it was allowed to them by this charter, to work all the mines of the new world for their advantage, or that of their assigns.

Fourth. The emperor gave the title of Adelantado, to the person whom the Welsers should appoint to the government of that colony.

Fifth. The imperial cedula permitted the Welsers to make slaves of such Indians as should refuse to become their vassals.

It is true the Emperor Charles V. appointed a priest, Father Montesillo, to be the protector of the Indians; but some historians have given to this precaution the term of a refinement in hypocrisy. From whatever motive it arose, Montesillo found it more profitable to participate in the plunder of the Welsers, than fulfil the duties of his pious mission. The agents of those bankers behaved in that devoted country, as commercial companies have always done, to which the sovereignty of distant regions has been confided. To found durable establishments, or encourage agriculture and the arts, has never been the noble ambition of such men. Stimulated by the desire of accumulating riches speedily, and returning to enjoy them in their native country, the Welsers



began by exactions and pillage, and were not long in familiarising themselves with murder, rapine and cruelty. Such was the conduct of Alfinger, the first Welser agent, and of his deputy, Sailer, who arrived at Coro in 1528, at the head of four hundred adventurers. Scarcely had they taken possession of the government, when they inquired where the mines of gold and silver were; but when Alfinger was informed that the country did not contain any, and that the means of enriching himself were not so easy as he had been assured in Spain, he sallied forth into the interior of the colony, at the head of a detachment, leaving Sailer to command at Coro. While on this predatory excursion he hunted the unoffending Indians, as if they were wild beasts, applying the torture to, or exterminating all those who did not bring him a certain quantity of gold dust on the appointed days; for although mines of gold had not been discovered then, yet it was found in the beds of some rivers. The colonists, who were a mixture of Spanish and Indian blood, were no better treated by Alfinger. He made incursions on their plantations, robbing all who fell in his power, and murdering any one that opposed his progress: he also sold the Indians to whoever would buy them. This wretch, no less cruel than insatiable, lost a great many troops in the first year of his government; but the Welsers took care to send him recruits occasionally: at length the relentless assassin was

massacred by the Indians, in 1531, in a valley that has ever since borne his name, *El Vallé de Misser Ambrosio*, the Valley of Ambrosio, for that was the monster's name. The Welsers had sent another German to succeed Alfinger in case of death : this man, instead of roaming about, armed, like his predecessor, led a tranquil life at Coro, gorging himself with pillage which never ceased to be exacted, as in the time of the former governor.

In 1533, the Welsers sent out Spirra with the title of governor ; he had under his orders four hundred men, Spaniards or natives of the Canary Islands : when he had united his troops to those which were in the colony, he divided them into three bands, which penetrated the country to plunder it, he being at the head of one of those detachments. This expedition lasted five years : Spirra returned to Coro in 1539, bringing back but eighty of the four hundred men whom he had taken with him. It was on this journey that the story of the fabulous country of El Dorado originated. It is probable that the Indians invented this fable, to attract their greedy tyrants into the large forests of their country, that they might perish the more easily. Spirra died at Coro of fatigue and chagrin. The court of Spain had sent a bishop named Bastidas, to Venezuela, in 1536. At the death of Spirra, the *audiencia* of Saint Domingo, which at that time, had the superintendence of the other colo-



nies, conferred the government on this bishop; Philip de Urré, a general officer, was appointed to command the troops. Those two men shewed themselves in every thing worthy of succeeding to the agents of the Welsers.

The Bishop Bastidas commenced by ordering an officer named Pedro Limpias to go on an expedition against the Indians of the Lake Maracaibo, on whom it was expected a large contribution in gold might be raised; but the result having produced only a small quantity, the people were sold as slaves, when all hope was lost of procuring by their means a greater supply of that metal.

Bastidas then sent Philip de Urré in search of the far famed El Dorado. After having pillaged, and assassinated all who fell into his hands during the four years the expedition lasted, Urré returned to Coro, without discovering the chimera, reduced to the last stage of misery, and after having lost nearly all the accomplices of his crimes. On his arrival he was assassinated by Limpias, and Carvajal, who by means of false papers seized on the government of the colony, whilst Bastidas had been sent to fill the episcopal chair of Porto Rico. Carvajal founded the town of Tucuyo, the only establishment formed in the colony during the time it remained in the power of the Welsers.

At length the eloquent voice of the immortal LAS CASAS succeeded in asserting the rights of

suffering humanity at the court of Charles V.: that monarch reclaimed those powers which none ought ever to alienate, especially in favour of commercial companies; he resumed the actual sovereignty of Venezuela, and the ferocious agents of the Welsers were expelled. Grant Heaven that those who now exercise a tyranny no less cruel and diabolical, may ere long experience the fate of the Welsers and their agents!

Returned to the administration of a deputy appointed by their sovereign, the colonists were at length relieved. Those who had survived the tyranny of the traders, resumed the occupations of agriculture and the useful arts, under the government of Don Juan Peres de Tolosa.\* Various edicts, published from 1526 to 1542, declare the Indians free; but it is known other edicts had encroached on their liberty. At length in 1546, it was solemnly proclaimed by Toloso, and extended even to those who might be taken in arms: these he distributed in several villages, under the superintendence of Spanish chiefs, where they were subjected to a kind of feudal government; a system, which, when prudently administered, is perhaps one of the best and surest for training savages to civilization.

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\* Raynal says, that the conduct of the Spaniards was not in the least different from that which had just been the cause of so many horrors. The Spanish historians and chronicles of Caracas and Cumana, however, eulogize Tolosa.



The plan of distribution, which the chiefs did not delay in turning to an abuse, was changed in many colonies for that of the *encomiendas*. There was this difference between these two modes: in the last, the Spanish chief, or inspector of the Indians, was prohibited from residing in the same village with them. The encomendero was a kind of inspector or surveyor, appointed to visit them on certain days, to decide on their differences, and induce them to renounce the customs of savage life; also to inspire a taste for agriculture, arts, and civilization; in short, to aid the missionaries with all his influence. This system was certainly preferable to that of the repartimiento. It may be seen by the prohibition which the legislature placed against the encomenderos residing in the same village with the Indians, that the cause of humanity had made considerable progress. It was feared, with good reason, that the constant presence of arbitrary commanders, among artless and ignorant men, would end in habituating those chiefs to treat them as slaves. Notwithstanding all the precautions taken by a sovereign who resided nearly two thousand leagues from these new states; as generally happens, the encomenderos concluded by abusing their authority, and appropriating the labour of the poor Indians to themselves.

“The Indians,” says M. de Humboldt, “whose liberty had been proclaimed in vain by Queen Isabella, were, until then, the slaves of the whites.

who had collected them promiscuously. By the establishment of the *encomiendas*, slavery took a more regular form. To put an end to the dissensions among the conquerors, the remains of the conquered people were distributed to them; the Indians, divided into tribes of several hundreds of families, had masters appointed in Spain from among the soldiers who had distinguished themselves in the conquest, and among the lawyers (*Licenciados*,) that the court sent to govern the provinces, and serve as a counterpoise to the usurping power of the generals. A great number of the *encomiendas*, and the best, were given to the monks. Religion, which, by its principles, ought to be favourable to liberty, was debased in availing itself of the slavery of the people. This distribution of the Indians attached them to the soil; their labour belonged to the *encomenderos*. The vassal frequently took the family name of his master; many Indian families bear Spanish names to this day, without having ever mixed their blood with that of Europeans. The court of Madrid thought it gave protectors to the Indians; but it had increased the evil, by rendering the oppression more systematic.

“Such was the state of the Mexican cultivators in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Since the eighteenth, their lot has become progressively more fortunate: the families of the conquerors are partly extinct: the *encomiendas*, considered as fiefs, have not been distributed anew; the



viceroys, and especially the audiencias, have watched over the interests of the Indians; their liberties, and in many provinces, even their comforts, have increased gradually. Above all, it was Charles III. who, by measures no less wise than energetic, was the benefactor of the natives: he abolished the encomiendas, and prohibited the repartimientos, by which the corregidores arbitrarily constituted themselves the creditors, and consequently masters of the labour of the natives, in providing for them, at exorbitant terms, horses, mules, and dress. The establishment of intendancies, which is due to the administration of the Count de Galvez, has become a memorable era for the benefit of the Indians. The annoyances to which the cultivator was incessantly exposed on the part of the Spanish and Indian subaltern magistrates, have greatly diminished under the active inspection of the superintendents; the natives begin to enjoy the advantages which the laws, generally mild and humane, have granted them, but of which they were deprived in ages of barbarism and oppression. The first appointment of persons to whom the court confided the important places of superintendents, or of governors of provinces, was very fortunate. Among the twelve who administered the country in 1804, there was not one whom the public accused of corruption, or want of integrity.\*

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\* See his Essay on New Spain.

Heaven forbid that I should endeavour to palliate the crimes of those rapacious and unjust men who availed themselves of the gifts of civilization only for the purpose of reducing the unhappy Indians to slavery! The observations of M. de Humboldt are equally just and wise; when the Spaniards conquered Mexico, they found a people who had made a great progress in civilization, and to whom there was only wanting a knowledge of the art of writing, to be on a level with the greater part of the European nations of that period. The Mexicans were cultivators, and practised many of our mechanical and chemical arts: a good government, and wise laws, would have exacted the adoration of a people that groaned under the double tyranny of a Montezuma, and the most debasing feudality.

But, the aboriginal natives of Venezuela, were then in a very different situation: they had made no advances from a savage state, scarcely cultivating a few roots, and depending for the remainder of their wants on the spontaneous productions of nature, which were lavished in a climate so inviting to indolence. The Caribbs, Parias, and Caraccayans, had not arrived at the knowledge of domesticating animals; they were not even herdsmen or shepherds, and consequently far inferior to the Bedouins and Tartars. Something more than mere exhortations was therefore requisite to withdraw them from such a life, and induce them to become cultivators.



Even to this day the Indian tribes of the new world, so far from being ameliorated in their condition, have become completely depraved, and are almost extinct in the neighbourhood of European settlements, particularly the British and French, which have not subjected them to their laws. Since the abolition of the Jesuits, drunkenness, licentiousness, and the small pox, have destroyed nearly all the communities that lived in the vicinity of the French and English possessions in the two Americas. At Cayenne, for example, more than sixty thousand Indians were counted in 1720; and fifteen years after they had lost their Jesuit missionaries, that is to say in 1777, there remained only four or five thousand; in 1809, there were scarcely two hundred!

It is not much more than ten years since the savages of Brazil were still subjected to a kind of feudal system; the native population, far from becoming annihilated, as in the neighbourhood of the British and French possessions, had increased as well as in the Spanish colonies. At that period M. de Souza Coutinho, governor of Grand Pará, liberated by order of his government, two hundred thousand Indians, all cultivators, carpenters, cabinet-makers, masons, &c. in that province only. If the ancestors of those savages had been abandoned to themselves, and not collected together under the care of missionaries and European chiefs, the vicinity of the white colonists, of whom they contract only the vices, when they

are not held in subjection by a vigilant and steady police, would no doubt have reduced them to as small a number as those who vegetate, and are on the point of extinction in French Guiana and Canada.

It is truly surprising, that a country which began under such unfavourable auspices in 1529, should have had a considerable population in 1560. At that period, the towns of Cumana, Coro, Barquisimeto, Palmes de Nirga, Tocuyo, Borburato, Valencia, Truxillo, and Collado were already founded. The district of the Lake Maracaibo, which at first formed the government of Venezuela, that has since given its name to the general government of Caraccas, and which now forms one of the states of the Venezuelan confederation, was first visited in 1499, by Alfonso Ojeda. This adventurer did not form any establishment there, and only thought of plunder. The first colonial establishment, that of Coro, was made in 1527, by Ampues: in the following year the colony was delivered to the Welsers, under the tyranny of whom it languished until 1545.

It was therefore, in the short space of twenty-five years that the towns mentioned after Cumana and Coro, were founded. No historical record informs us of the population of Maracaibo or Coro in 1560; but according to a manuscript which I received from a respectable inhabitant of the Caraccas in 1807, the population of Maracaibo, in 1560, was about 16,000.



The resources of that country, and perseverance of the first colonists, must have been great, to produce such an increase, without any commercial connection with the mother country. Previous to 1660, no ship had ever sailed from Spain to exchange its productions for those of the colony; the intercourse of the Welsers having had for their object only the discovery and working of the mines. But a considerable population being created by the marriages of Europeans with the Indian women, those colonists sent a deputy to Spain in 1555, calling upon their sovereign for a reform in the colonial administration, and permission to despatch annually from Spain to the port of Borburata, at the expense and risque of the colonists, a vessel, whose cargo should be liable to pay only half the excessive duties then levied on cargoes that arrived at, or were sent from America. This favour was granted in December, 1560: from that time until 1575, a ship went every year to Borburato. But the town of Caraccas having been founded in 1565, by Diego Lozada, and that part of the colony becoming more populous than the district of Maracaibo, owing to the superior fertility of its soil and delightful climate, the ship ceased to visit Borburata from 1576, thenceforth frequenting La Guyra, the nearest port to the Caraccas. Pearls were the principal object taken in return: a little cocoa, vanilla, indigo, arnotto, and deer skins, formed the remainder of the

the cargo. But the rapacity and want of precaution with which the pearl fishery was carried on, about the Island of Margarita, caused the almost total destruction of the oysters that produced them, at the same time that it occasioned the loss of thousands of Indians who were forcibly employed as divers in the fishery. This occupation having been fruitless, during the last hundred and fifty years, it has been abandoned, and the oysters in which the pearls are found, have again multiplied on the coasts of that island. In 1807, I saw a person, who had procured about four hundred of them, in the course of the preceding year.

The colony remained for a long time in the same state; its population increasing by the abundance of its provisions, but unable to enrich itself from the want of commerce. The Dutch, who had formed an establishment at Curaçoa in 1634, did not, however, delay entering into commercial connections with the Spanish colonists; agriculture then assumed another aspect, and cocoa soon became the principal article of cultivation. The animals received from Europe, were better managed; they have since multiplied to such a degree, that the colonists having many more than they could keep, horses, asses, mules and oxen, have at length ran wild in the desert plains and forests, where travellers and hunters find them in herds of many thousands.

When the relative increase and prosperity of



this colony was known in Europe, and also the large profits gained there by the Dutch in their contraband trade, the Spanish merchants petitioned their government for permission to send cargoes out. But, as it was necessary to have a special licence from the king, for the despatch of each vessel, which licences were very expensive, and as they were granted on the express condition that they should be sent from Seville only, as also that they should return to discharge at that port, not to mention the enormous imposts exacted on leaving Spain and reaching America : it was found totally impossible to support a competition with the Dutch interlopers in the new world : consequently the two vessels which were sent from Seville in 1655 and 1656, made ruinous voyages. Other merchants having attempted to renew this trade by sending three ships in 1680, were not more fortunate, in consequence of the imbecile rapacity of their government. The company of Guipuscoa was formed in 1722. The object of this association was to engross the trade of the colony, to the exclusion of the Dutch. Its first operations were favourable to the colonists, and profitable to the share-holders ; but the old spirit of insatiable avarice, that always gains the ascendancy in commercial monopolies, did not fail soon to render the company odious to both colonists and government. Its agents having found it more profitable to trade with the Dutch in

Curaçoa, than with Spain, ended by sending very few vessels to the latter country. It is curious to observe how in all times, and in every nation, this monstrous avarice of exclusive companies has produced the same results, and concluded by effecting their destruction. It is confidently said, that, for about fifteen years past, the British East India Company sell licences or protections to neutrals to trade to their ports in India. This knavery, (what other term can more appropriately be applied to it?) has produced some colossal fortunes in England and America, whilst the trade was prohibited to the merchants of England, Ireland and Scotland.\*

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\* It is sincerely to be hoped that the above assertion was merely a report: if otherwise, the author's language is certainly not too strong; and whether true or false, the recent alteration in the East India Company's charter, has removed the evil. God knows the mercantile sovereigns of the east, have enough of sins to answer for, without the disreputable charge of adding to their revenue in the manner stated by M. Lavaysse. But the author is by no means singular in his dislike to exclusive privileges in commerce. The Abbe de Pradt, whose enlightened opinions on the subject cannot be too often read, or highly praised, observes—"To see the use which the moderns have made of exclusive commercial companies; to contemplate this practice as consecrated by nations and ages; to compare the system with those effects which it has never failed to produce, together with the expences into which it has led the mother country and her colonies; it is scarcely possible to avoid being surprized at the respect one has felt towards institutions, that have been thus sanctioned no less by the imposing authority of



The company of Guipuscoa, after having experienced various modifications, was at last abolished in 1778, by an edict of Charles III., to which the Spaniards have given the term of the "edict of free trade." From that period, as glorious for the monarch as it was fortunate for the mother country and its colonies, is to be dated an increase of population and wealth which can scarcely be believed, under a government vicious in every other respect. The popu-

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their authors, than the seal of time. To buy at a low price from the producer, and sell dearly to the consumer; to graduate the proportion of abundance, not on public want, but according to the interest of the privileged few, has always, and ever will be, the maxim of exclusive companies: they will think much less of providing for those who have the misfortune of being left to their mercy, than of keeping away those who wish to participate in their profits. People have invariably adduced the advantages of exclusive commerce to palliate the odious parts of it. But who can ever believe that a nation ought to be excluded for its advantage? It is high time to speak in the language of truth, and proclaim that the word *exclusive* should be henceforth banished from the vocabulary of every civilized people, and confined to that of Turkey or other countries equally enlightened!"—See Chap. X. of the Abbe's famous work on the Colonies. Nor is our own celebrated political economist Adam Smith much more partial to trading companies. See the admirable remarks in Vol. II. p. 505, *et passim*, of his admirable work on the Wealth of Nations, wherein that independent writer does not hesitate to declare mercantile companies incapable of consulting their true interests when they become sovereigns, finally considering them as a public nuisance.—ED.

lation of Venezuela alone has more than doubled in the space of twenty-nine years; it was a million of souls in 1809.

The edict of 1778 was issued most opportunely, at a moment when the British colonies of North America had risen to shake off the yoke of the parent state; so that the Spanish colonists testified no desire to imitate their neighbours, and seemed contented with what was granted to them. The principles of the French revolution did not as yet inflame their minds, though some individuals endeavoured to convince the people, they also had a right to civil and political liberty. It is, however, a singular fact, that whilst Great Britain was at war with France, under the specious pretence of preserving herself from its principles, her ministers no sooner heard of the treaty of Basle, by which Spain made peace with France, than they lavished the public treasures to propagate ideas that had been dissipated in France, as soon as the commotions inseparable from such a great revolution had ceased. Scarcely had the Island of Trinidad been delivered to them, than they established a focus of insurrection, destined not only to render Spanish America independent, but to overturn and ruin it like our colonies. Historical impartiality requires me to state that His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, as well as many distinguished personages in England, expressed their indignation at this perfidious mode of making war.



At the time that Great Britain took possession of Trinidad, great discontents had prevailed in the province of Caraccas for some months, owing to the exactions recently committed by the officers of the customs, and the vexations practised by a police magistrate.

During these occurrences, three Spanish state prisoners arrived at La Guayra, condemned to imprisonment for life in one of the forts. These were men of great talents: one of them, Picornel, had been surnamed by his countrymen, the Spanish Mirabeau; they availed themselves of the public discontent, to interest the commander and officers of the garrison in their fate. Fahrenheit's thermometer is generally at ninety degrees in the casemates, in which they were ordered to be confined, a circumstance that excited the pity of the garrison. The commander, therefore, took upon himself to allow them the fort as their prison. The eloquence of Picornel, and the singular talents of his two companions, gave rise to the esteem and friendship of all those who saw them; the inhabitants of the neighbourhood obtained leave to visit the fort. On perceiving every one, even to the priests and monks, exasperated against the administrators of the colony, the triumvirate formed the bold project of delivering the country from the yoke of its oppressors. Don Joseph de España, corregidor of Macuto, and Don Manuel Gual, captain of engi-

neers, both natives of Caraccas, undertook to organize this revolution.

The prisoners, however, finding that the conspirators were not sufficiently forward in putting their project into execution, and fearing a discovery, made their escape: soon after one of them became mad and died. The 14th July, 1797, was the day fixed by España and Gaul, for raising the standard of independence: those conspirators were not Catalines; they were the most distinguished men in the colony for their talents, virtues, fortune, and even their birth. Their object was to possess themselves of the heads of the government, to keep them as hostages, and treat them with the greatest kindness, especially the Captain General Carbonel, who detested, and had even endeavoured by every means in his power to put an end to the crying vexations committed by certain administrators: their plan was imitated in all points by the congress of Venezuela, when it declared itself independent of the Junta of Cadiz, in 1811. On the 13th July, 1797, in the evening, a conspirator seized with fear, went to the cathedral and rang one of the bells. It is thus that a criminal acts in Spain, after having committed murder, in order that a priest may go and give him absolution, and secure impunity for him. This man required they should conduct him to the archbishop, to whom he promised to reveal the conspiracy, on condition that the Captain General and the Audiencia would guarantee his life. What



he demanded was granted. Orders were suddenly issued to arrest all the persons he accused : España and Gual, who were at La Guayra, had timely notice to escape ; which they effected in a boat to Curaçoa, from whence they went to Trinidad, where I became acquainted with them. The other conspirators, to the number of seventy-two, were arrested and imprisoned. The colonial government sent a despatch to Spain, to give intelligence of this occurrence. The king, after having received the official report, convinced that his Venezuelan subjects had been driven to despair and rebellion by the unheard-of exactions of his administrators, ordered that the conspirators should be treated with clemency and sent to Spain. But the latter had reason to fear, that if they were sent, the truth would have been made known to the sovereign, and themselves sacrificed to the just resentment of the colonists. This was the motive which induced them, instead of obeying the order of their sovereign, to linger out the process of the prisoners ; and it may be well supposed they did not omit informing the minister, reasons of state required that, at least, some of the principal heads should fall.

During the above period España was at Trinidad, the most unhappy of mankind, by his separation from a wife and children whom he tenderly loved. It was not unknown at Trinidad that the king had recommended clemency : this intelligence, and the desire of seeing his family again,

induced him to adopt the resolution of returning to his country, in spite of all that those who were most interested in his fate could say to dissuade him from it. He, therefore, returned to the neighbourhood of Caraccas, where he remained concealed for some time, at the house of a friend, where he had the consolation of seeing his wife and children occasionally. It would seem as if the Audiencia had, until then, respected the king's order, only for the purpose of attracting España and Gual into the country, two men whose talents, courage, and popularity they most feared. As had been foreboded by his friends, the retreat of España was discovered, the house surrounded, and himself taken.

The trial of the conspirators had now been carried on for nearly two years; every one supposed that, in consequence of the king's orders, they would be no further punished than by sending them to Spain. During those events, a new captain general came to take possession of the government of those provinces: scarcely had España been taken, when the trial, which many supposed forgotten, was renewed: this created the utmost consternation, and excited a great fermentation in the country. The new captain general, Don Miguel de Vasconcellos, received anonymous letters, threatening another disturbance, if the life of Don Joseph de España should be endangered. Those letters produced no other effect than that of irritating him. Vas-



concellos possessed neither the knowledge, virtue, nor the calm firmness of Carbonel, his predecessor: yet he was not malicious or tyrannical, but one of those narrow-minded men who conceal their weakness by a degree of violence, to which they endeavour in vain to give the appearance of greatness of mind and fortitude. Instead of controuling the subalterns, he neglected every part of the administration, except the military; complaint and murmurs recommenced, and the oppressors of the colony represented those complaints and murmuring to him as indicating a spirit of revolt. Severe measures were redoubled at the moment when most people called for, and all would have been satisfied by a removal of the abuses. As a proof that it was the excess of oppression, and not the contagion of revolutionary principles, that inspired the inhabitants of Caraccas with the desire of throwing off the Spanish yoke, it should be remarked that the province of Cumana, or New Andalusia, did not participate in those troubles, although both these provinces were adjacent; and the English, who had then much more commercial intercourse with Cumana than the Caraccas, had omitted nothing to propagate a spirit of independence in New Andalusia. But the latter was governed by a man of integrity, and of a disinterested, firm character, Emperan: under such heads, symptoms of discontent or revolt are never manifested.

But to return to the process against España

and the other conspirators ; the threats addressed to the captain general produced no other effect than that of hastening their ruin. It was discovered afterwards that those anonymous menaces had been fabricated by the auditor of war, Lavnes ; who, seeing that the Captain General Vascancellos inclined to mercy, invented the above diabolical stratagem, to exasperate him against the accused. This malignant magistrate, who had long sold his decisions at Trinidad and Caraccas to the highest bidder, and who the congress of Venezuela had merely banished, knew that if España should obtain access to the throne, he would reveal his numerous extortions.

Seven of the accused were condemned to die ; one of them for contumacy. Five were executed at La Guayra in the beginning of May, 1799, and on the 8th of the same month, Don Joseph de España was drawn and quartered at Caraccas. "Conducted to execution," says a celebrated writer, whom I shall quote on this occasion, "he saw the approach of death with the courage of a man born for great actions."\* Thirty-three of the other prisoners were condemned to the gallies : there remained in prison thirty-two, against whom there were no proofs ; they were sent to Spain : Charles IV. pardoned them in 1802, and gave them employments, on condition that they should never return to their own country.

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\* M. de Humboldt.



During the time proceedings were carrying on against España, one of his relations went to a Scotchman residing at Caraccas, who was the secret agent and banker of his government in that capital: the Venezuelan told the agent that the relations and friends of España had subscribed to form a sum of thirty thousand dollars, by means of which they would save his life: the half of this sum was to be paid to Lavnes, who had put that price on his escape, and the remaining fifteen thousand dollars were destined for the jailor, who had promised to run away with him. A boat was waiting for them in the port of La Guayra; the prisoner's friends were deficient of eight thousand dollars; every species of security was offered to obtain from him that sum by way of loan. This man, who had then more than a hundred thousand dollars in his chest, and who had inveigled the too credulous España into his schemes, was deaf and insensible to their proposals!

I was acquainted with España: he had one of those frank and open countenances, but pensive and full of sensibility, such as I have sometimes seen, though very rarely, so fine, in the new world; a primordial type, of which scarcely any traces remain, except in the Pyrenees, Switzerland, the mountains of Scotland, and in some elevated regions in which the inhabitants have not been much intermingled with their neighbours. He was descended from an illustrious Bis-

cayan family, transplanted to America. his son went to Guadaloupe, and from thence to France, where he has found friends and a second country.

Gual, abandoned by the British government in 1801, soon afterwards died of a broken heart in Trinidad. It appears that in that year, Great Britain had deemed it proper to defer the anarchy of the Spanish colonies; for the Governor of Trinidad ceased to pension the persons he employed for that purpose, and to encourage those who were really desirous of the independence of their country. This requires some explanation.\*

There is a period when colonies must cease to be subject to the countries that have founded them: nature herself indicates that period: it is that in which they have sufficient strength to maintain themselves in regard to self-defence and commerce. The Spanish colonies, the islands of Cuba, Porto Rico, and Trinidad excepted, have approached rapidly to this situation for more than half a century. The identity of religion, opinions, recollections, origin and language; the ties of kindred; all that of which the endearing name of country is composed, formed the moral cement which retained those of Spain under the

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\* It does! and the editor trusts for the honour of his country, that the friends of those ministers who patronized the heroic but unfortunate Miranda, will come forward to disprove many of those charges which remain unanswered, but which his impartiality and love of truth will not allow the editor to suppress.



authority of the common sovereign. In that respect, they differ from those which now form the United States of North America, whose inhabitants have sprung from colonies and emigrants sent out from nearly all the nations of Europe. The white population of the Spanish colonies having, on the contrary, an homogeneous origin, it is easy to conceive that nothing less than great oppressions in the government of one of those colonies, or a revolution occurring in the mother country, could break the moral ties by which it remained subject to its sovereign. These principles are advanced in order to distinguish the peaceable citizens and proprietors of a country, who are solicitous solely for its independence, from the factious agitators and spies hired by a powerful enemy, to propagate discord and anarchy in it.

An excellent governor, Don Vincente de Emparan, had, by the mere influence of his wisdom and virtues, put an end to public discontent in the province of Cumana, after the catastrophe of España. The fruits of his beneficent administration were still enjoyed under his successor, Don Manuel de Cagigal, in 1807, when I was in Cumana. Having, one day entered the store of a grocer, in that town, I found him occupied in making paper bags and wrappers of the declarations of the rights of man, copies of the social contract, and the bulls true or false of Pope Pius VI. which excommunicated the French nation. I inquired how those papers had come to his shop ; the fol-

lowing was his answer: "I made a voyage to Trinidad after the peace of Amiens: Mr. ——— gave me a bale containing five hundred copies of each of these writings, and as many by a Peruvian Jesuit, who has long resided in London, by which he instigated us to renounce our allegiance to our sovereign, and promised us the assistance of England. Such bales are given to all the traders who frequent the ports of Trinidad. As for me, I took mine to the governor, after having reserved some copies for making bags, &c. It must be acknowledged," added this Creole, a man of singular good sense, "that the British ministers are as perfidious as they are inconsistent: they send us these writings in order to inculcate democratic principles, whilst they at another time declared war against France, under the pretext of opposing her in an attempt to establish for herself that form of government which they now wish by all means to force us to adopt. They are Protestants, and they send us the Pope's bulls against the French, to inspire us with horror for that nation. They must truly deem us a very stupid race, in supposing that we can be entrapped in such a manner." "My friend," I replied, "it is of very little consequence to those ministers under what form of government you or we live: their great object is to sow enmity and discord among other nations, to obtain a monopoly of their commerce: that is the sole aim of *their* policy."

The reforms effected in the province of Carac-



cas by Don Pedro Carbonel, and in that of Cumana by Don V. de Emparan, (the two principal provinces of the general government of Venezuela,) had calmed and satisfied all minds; but, with those governors, it was not long before the good they had introduced also disappeared. The Captain General Vasconcellos having placed all his confidence, and in some measure transferred his authority to Lavnes, tyranny and extortions again distracted the colonists. General Miranda was invited by thousands of letters to go and place himself at the head of the insurgents in the year 1805. He appeared on the coast of Porto Cavello in the month of May, 1806; but the vessel that conveyed him was repulsed by the Spanish gun-boats. He repaired to Trinidad in the following month, and departed from it on the 1st of August, accompanied by about one hundred and eighty volunteers, escorted by a sloop of war from the squadron of Admiral Cochrane. Six days afterwards he landed at Coro, where he remained twelve days with his little troop, without being attacked by Colonel Salis, who was posted at four leagues from him. Miranda found the people of that thinly inhabited part of the province, very little disposed for a revolution, and seeing himself abandoned by the British admiral, who had promised him powerful aid, he decided on returning to Trinidad, where he was the object of the most cruel raillery, both to the English generals who had deceived him, and of those persons who had

previously lavished the meanest flatteries on him, when they expected to see him soon become the head of a new state. I shall say nothing of the events that have since elevated him to the place of supreme chief of the United States of Venezuela, because I was not there when that revolution broke out; but I know that the persecutions exercised against the French, when that state was governed by the agents of the Junta of Cadiz, have ceased since the authority has passed into the hands of General Miranda and the independent party.

Here it is necessary to direct the reader's attention to two things: the first is, that as soon as the Audiencia of Caraccas had information that General Miranda was preparing at New York to invade his country, they hastened to put an end to public discontent, by prohibiting exactions and abuses, and by displacing some subaltern agents; which proves how mild the people are, and easy to be governed.

In the second place, it is to be observed that the British ministry of this period, the close of 1806, caused to be inserted in the London Gazette, an official letter from Admiral Cochrane, in which he announced the capture of Caraccas by General Miranda, while they ought to have known that the general had not approached within fifty leagues of that capital. As there were negociations for peace at the time, they



thought, perhaps, that this petty trick would have an influence on those which related to Spain.

### VENEZUELA.

This country is bounded on the north by the Caribbean Sea, and extends southward from St. Joseph de Rio Negro (where the Portuguese possessions begin,) which is in the first degree of northern latitude, to Cape de la Vela, in  $12^{\circ} 10'$ ; and from east to west from the  $62^{\circ}$  of West longitude, to  $75^{\circ} 50'$ . French and Dutch Cayenne form its eastern limits, and the kingdom of New Grenada, or Santa Fe de Bogota, bounds it on the west. A chain of mountains which stretch from the Andes de Bogota, meander across the country, first in a northern direction, then towards the east, and at length incline as they approach the coast. The Island of Trinidad, which is at the end of this chain, and that of Tobago to the eastward of Trinidad, are supposed to be vestiges of the great catastrophe which has detached them from it. To the south and north of the mountains are vast plains which extend to the east and west, and are terminated at the foot of the Andes de Bogota.

There are few countries so well watered, if we except the steppes or desarts which have been so

well described by M. de Humboldt. In a future chapter, I shall offer some observations on the periodical increase and decrease of the Orinoco. There are nearly three hundred and seventy marine leagues from the Raudal (cataract) of the Guajaribos, east of the Esmeralda (the nearest point to its sources, which are unknown) to the mouths of the Orinoco. The map prefixed to this work will shew its windings, the rivers it receives, its cataracts, and its depth between the town of St. Thomas and the sea, and also above the last named place.

The country is intersected in every direction by navigable rivers of various sizes. All those which are eastward of Cape de Paria, the Guarapiche, and the small rivers that flow into the Gulf of Paria excepted, are lost in the Orinoco. Many of its tributaries are more considerable than some distinguished rivers in Europe: the Rio Apure runs nearly one hundred and twelve leagues, and is navigable for large vessels for more than sixty leagues from its confluence with the Orinoco. In latitude  $7^{\circ} 32'$  N. it has four thousand six hundred and thirty-two fathoms in width, and is not impeded by islands.

The Guarapiche presents a very remarkable phenomenon: this river has its source, like all those of New Andalusia, in that part of the Llanos which is denominated Mesa (a platform or plain,) de Amana, Mesa de Guanipa, Mesa de Tororo, &c. The mountains that separate the ma-



ritime range of Paria from the granitic and amphibolic mountains of the Lower Orinoco, form a ridge very little above the rest of the plain; but this elevation, which is called Mesa, is sufficient to determine the rivers to run northward towards the gulf of Paria, and to the south into the Orinoco. The Guarapiche rises in the Mesa de Amana, to the south-west of the village of Mathurin: it receives near St. Antonio the Rio Colorado, then the Rio Punceres, and at last the large river Arco, which is called Rio de San Bonifacio near its source. The Governor Emparan had formed some very useful projects for colonial establishments on the fertile banks of the Arco and Guarapiche. The place where the Arco unites with the Guarapiche, at five leagues from its mouth, is called the Horquetta, a name given by the Spaniards to all junctions of rivers: at that point the Guarapiche has a depth of from forty to fifty fathoms. Previous to 1766, large vessels could have sailed up the Guarapiche to Mathurin: an earthquake has since raised its bed, and now the navigation of the Rio Arco is preferable. The latter is still sixteen fathoms deep as far as Port San Juan, at twenty-five leagues from the sea. I can venture to assert that there is no communication between the Guarapiche and Orinoco: I have never heard it mentioned in all the time I resided in that country, and in which I travelled through it in various directions. I was not a little surprised to find in the map of a work,

otherwise estimable, (Travels of M. de Pons,) a pretended canal of Morichal, a natural channel, that effected a communication between those two rivers above old Cayenne. M. de Humboldt, who navigated that river, had also no knowledge of any such communication. A geographer who raises or sinks mountains, forms or drains marshes with the same facility with which he penetrates into iron mines to the centre of the earth, has not placed in his map this curious and important river; and the place where its mouth is found in the Gulf of Paria, presents the extremity of a natural canal or branch of the Orinoco, which would commence on its left bank, at San Thomé de Augustura. The Guarapiche, notwithstanding its depth, and the great body of water it carries to the sea, has only from its sources to its mouth a course of thirty-three marine leagues.

This country contains a large lake, that of Maracaybo, some gulfs, and a most interesting lake for naturalists, that of Tacarigua. I shall say nothing of Lake Parima or El Dorado, which has so excited the invention of authors, and the avarice of adventurers; nothing being more dubious than its existence; and according to the astronomical observations of M. de Humboldt, if such a lake does exist, it ought to be situated more to the east, and consequently nearer to French Guyana than the maps have placed it. It has been suppressed in the new map of South America, by Arrowsmith. As for myself, I sus-



pect that this lake is only an immense plain, inundated annually in the rainy season.

The Lake Tacarigua, to which the Spaniards have given the name of Valencia, is situated at the southern extremity of the valley of Arogoa, and at twenty French leagues from Caraccas. It is elevated twelve hundred feet above the level of the sea, and has almost the shape of an oblong square: its length is thirteen leagues from east to west, and it is two leagues broad in almost its whole extent. The contrast of the desert and barren mountains of Guigue, with the hills and vallies opposite, ornamented with the most beautiful tropical vegetation, and even the fields of corn and fruit trees of Europe, and the vicinity of the little town of Valencia, agreeably reminds an European of the lake of Geneva and Vevay. The mountains of Caraccas, it is true, have not the grand appearance of the Alps; but then how much superior the rich, varied and majestic vegetation which ornaments the borders of the Tacarigua, is to the most beautiful natural productions of Europe! I was there in company with a Dane, (Mr. West,) a man of talents. Whilst we were absorbed in the contemplation of that delightful scene, the native of the north suddenly exclaimed: "It is here that we should fix our residence for the remainder of our lives: I shall return to Santa Cruz, there collect my property, and come to these charming shores, which shall also be my tomb."

Several small rivers and streams flow into this lake, which has no outlet: this has induced the people of the country, and even some writers, to believe that it communicates with the sea by subterraneous channels; but a celebrated naturalist, who has studied nature on the spot, and calculated her operations, thinks that by the evaporation more water is exhaled from the lake than is carried to it. It is thus that M. de Humboldt explains the formation of the small islands that have been formed in the lake: at first they were only sand-banks, which by degrees became covered with vegetables. Another cause that I had the means of observing at Trinidad, has contributed, without doubt, to the formation of these islands; the draining and cultivation of the vallies of Aragoa. There is a prodigious difference between the quantity of slime carried off by the rains and torrents in a cultivated, or a savage country: it is known that in the latter the quantity of earth washed away is much less than in the former: if the mountains and vallies which surround the Lake Tacarigua, had not lost their ancient trees and thick turf, perhaps it would have required a thousand years to have formed these small islands in its bed. From time to time new ones are seen to arise. The inhabitants of the neighbourhood have given to them a name that justly characterises them: Las Aparecidas, the new-born islands. A great number of small crocodiles are seen in this lake,



which never attack the persons who go there to bathe.

The shape of the Lake Maracaybo is an oval, of fifty leagues in length, by thirty in breadth; which makes a circumference of about a hundred and fifty leagues: this lake is situated between the lowest part of the mountains of Santa Martha, and near the place where the chain begins, which is detached from the Andes de Bogota: it communicates with a gulf of half its size, by a passage of about two leagues broad and eight long: thus this lake forms a little Mediterranean: it receives the tribute of more than twenty rivers, and a great number of rivulets that run down the two ridges of mountains, between which it is situated. The most considerable are the Subio and the Matacau; for the Souba and the Cuervos, though wide at their mouths, are only creeks fed by torrents, into which the waters of the lake recoil during winter.

The Souba has nearly eight leagues of length, and the Cuervos forms a curve of about fifteen leagues: both of those creeks are navigable. It is between them and the mountains, that the Guahiros are found; warlike Indians who have never been subjected by the Spaniards. They extend to the other side of the mountains, along the Rio de la Hache to the borders of the sea. The Rio de la Hache in that part forms the boundary between the government of Caraccas and the kingdom of New Grenada.

Though the Lake of Maracaybo communicates with the sea by a gulf, of which the opening is about fifteen leagues, its waters are sweet and fit for use; but when the wind blows inward with violence, the sea water rushes into the lake, and its water becomes brackish until the wind changes. This lake is not subject to tempests; yet when the north-wind is strong, it produces a short and broken swell that sometimes does considerable injury to the smaller craft.

The tide rises higher in this lake than on the adjacent coasts, where it is scarcely perceptible. It is the same in the Gulf of Paria, and in that of Cariaco, because the tide and wind oppose the water there, which continually runs out. On the north-west shore of the Lake Maracaybo is an extensive mine of asphaltum, of the same nature as that in Trinidad. When the Spaniards discovered this country, they found a great number of Indian villages situated about the lake, built on piles, which was the reason that they gave it the name of Venezuela, as already noticed. This name soon extended to all the province; of which Coro became the capital. The town of Caracas having been since made the metropolis of all the countries that compose the captain generalship, its district took the name of the Province of Venezuela; the country surrounding the lake was named the province of Maracaybo; the other three continental provinces were termed Varinas, Guyana, and Cumana. The country known by



the name of New Andalusia, as well as the Island of Margarita, form part of the government of Cumana.

The Island of Trinidad formed a sixth province or particular government, depending on that of Caraccas, before the English got possession of it. A captain general, intendant, and an *audiencia*, or supreme tribunal of justice and finance, composed the superior government of those provinces. The provincial governors were directly subjected to the captain general of Caraccas in all affairs concerning the military and civil government; to the intendant, of whom they took the title of sub-delegates, for financial concerns; and the *audiencia* was a tribunal to which appeals were made, not only from the decisions of the provincial courts, but also to which individuals had the right of summoning such persons in office as they thought they had reason to complain of.

There was a privilege of appeal from the decrees of the *audiencia*, to the supreme council of the Indies, at Madrid. A government where all the departments were so regulated as to watch and balance each other, was no doubt admirably calculated to protect the rights of the subject, and establish a laudable emulation among its officers, which ought to promote public prosperity; and such was always its happy result, when those provinces were governed by an honest, vigilant and firm captain general, like Don Pedro Carbonel. But as it unfortunately happens, it became an established practice at Madrid to

give or sell the administrative and judicial places to the lowest class of office clerks, and those of lawyers, who paid an annual acknowledgment to their patrons; and that this abuse had extended even to the nomination of the most insignificant military commands, it is easy to conceive how the colonists must have been oppressed under such a system, particularly whenever it happened that the captain general was a rapacious man, desirous to acquire a fortune, and return to Europe to enjoy it.

According to M. Depons, the population of the five provinces of Venezuela, Varinas, Maracaybo, Cumana, and Guyana, amounted to only seven hundred and twenty-eight thousand souls in 1802. In his calculation the whites composed two-tenths of this population, the slaves three, the free people of colour four, and the Indians one tenth. Agreeably to this calculation, there ought to have been two hundred and eighteen thousand four hundred slaves in those provinces, whilst, in reality, there were not fifty-eight thousand.

This is the manner in which M. Depons distributes the population :

Venezuela and Varinas	-	500,000 souls.
Maracaybo	- -	100,000
Cumana and Margarita	-	94,000
Spanish Guayana	- -	34,000
Total		<hr/> 728,000 souls. <hr/>



According to the calculations of M. de Humboldt, which correspond with the documents that were furnished to myself, five years after his residence in Caraccas, the population of those provinces, was in 1800, about nine hundred thousand souls, of whom only fifty-four thousand were slaves. A well informed administrator of Cumana, communicated some statements to me in the month of May, 1807, by which it would appear that the population of those provinces amounted to more than nine hundred and seventy-five thousand souls. It is true that there had been comprised in that table an enumeration of several tribes of Indians not united in missions; for instance, the Guaraouins, who live in the small islands situated at the mouth of the Orinoco, and of whom the number is supposed to be about ten thousand; some hordes of Arroouaks, who live between the Orinoco and the Rio Esequibo, about four thousand; and lastly, the Guahiros, who live in the mountains situated between the Lake of Maracaybo and the Rio de la Hache, whose number cannot be less than fifty thousand persons. We shall observe, by the way, that M. Depous, after having said at page 313 of the first volume of his travels, that this tribe contains only thirty thousand individuals, says, at page 319, that they can muster fourteen thousand warriors!

In the states of which I have just spoken, there was to be found a table of the progressive

population of the vallies of the Cape de Paria, where, since the year 1794, there have been established a considerable number of cultivators from various nations, particularly Irish and French: the latter are the chief part of the colonists of Grenada, Tobago, and Trinidad, who sought an asylum there from oppression. This new colony, unknown to the rest of the world, contains about seven thousand individuals of all ages, ranks and colours. Those of the Punta de Piedra cultivate cocoa successfully; those of Guira cotton wool: there are some sugar plantations, and some of coffee in the other vallies. I passed some very agreeable moments among those worthy people in 1807. Their manner of life, simple and laborious, the abundance and comfort in every necessary, the absence of all that approaches luxury in their dress, furniture, and houses; the good will, harmony, and hospitality that prevailed among them, (there was neither lawyer nor inn-keeper, and very few doctors) made me particularly regret their society. I left in that infant colony men who had figured in the most brilliant companies of Germany and France: the latter are Frenchmen; some who have been obliged to fly from the persecutions of two or three renegados of their nation, established at Trinidad, and who, banished for ever from France, have become the most bitter enemies of their former countrymen: others are Frenchmen who have chosen rather to aban-



don their properties in the islands conquered by the British, than to take oaths and sign declarations hostile to their sovereign. These men, frank, energetic, laborious, strangers to all political intrigue, and who have no other wish than that of cultivating their new plantations in peace, were yet annoyed, and some of them plundered by a Spanish administrator, at a time when the British government possessed a great influence in the colonies of the former nation. But since the independent party has obtained the ascendancy at Caraccas over that of the Junta, and that liberal principles have succeeded to tyranny and fanaticism, the colonists of the French origin established in the state of Venezuela partake with the other citizens the benefit of the new government.

As I have spoken of the oppressions committed on the peaceable French cultivators, at the instigation of others, it will not be out of place here to add, that it was at the demand of an agent of the British government, that several hundreds of the unfortunate colonists of St. Domingo, refugees in the island of Cuba, were expelled from it in 1808: and what had these unhappy colonists done against that government? The greater part of them had fought under its banners, when in the delirium of jealousy and hatred, and in the beginning of the French revolution it sent pretended succours to them, under the pretext of quelling the insurrection; but, in

reality, to accomplish the ruin of that queen of colonies! Those interesting victims had conveyed to the United States, and from thence, amidst a thousand dangers, to the Island of Cuba, their wives, children, and some portion of the wreck of their fortunes, which they had saved from the fury of the negroes, or from the rapacity of the British: they lived unknown to the rest of mankind, clearing the forests to plant the means of subsistence there!

Caraccas, the metropolis of the province of Venezuela while under the Spanish yoke, was founded in 1566, by Diego de Losada: it is situated in the delicious Valley of Arragon. Its elevation above the level of the sea is three thousand feet, according to the observations made by M. de Humboldt at the Trinity church. Although it is in  $10^{\circ} 30'$  of latitude, and  $67^{\circ}$  of West longitude, this elevation, added to some other local causes, suffices to give it during our winter, the temperature of our spring, and in that season, the heat is very seldom so great as in our summers: this will be seen by the thermometrical observations inserted in the course of this chapter. It is the residence of the captain general; of the intendant; of the audiencia, or supreme administrative and judicial tribunal; of an archbishop; a chapter; a tribunal of the inquisition (abolished by the present government,) and an university; it has some what of a triangular shape, and is about two thousand toises long on each of its sides.



Like all other towns in the new world, its streets are drawn at right angles, and are rather wide. Being built on an unequal surface, whatever Caraccas wants in regularity, it gains in picturesque effect: many of the houses have terraced roofs, others are covered with bent tiles; there are many that have only a ground floor; the rest have but one story more: they are built either of brick or of earth well pounded, and covered with stucco, of an architecture sufficiently solid, elegant, and adapted to the climate. Many of them have gardens in their rear, which is the reason that this town has an extent equal to an European one that would contain a hundred thousand persons. Four beautiful streams that traverse it, contribute to its coolness and cleanliness, and give it an air of animation which is not found in towns deprived of running water. As in some towns of the Alps and Pyrenees, each householder in Caraccas has the invaluable advantage of having in his house a pipe of running and limpid water, which does not prevent all the squares, and almost all the streets from having public fountains. In general there is much luxury and gilding in the decorations of the houses of wealthy persons, and among all, more cleanliness and comfort than in Spain. This town does not possess any public edifice remarkable for its beauty and size, with the exception of the church of Alta Gracia, built at the expense of the people of colour in Caraccas and its vicinity.

The town is divided into five parishes: that of the Cathedral, Alta Gracia, Saint Paolo, Saint Rosalia, and La Candelaria. Three other churches belong to confraternities: Saint Maurice, the Divina Pastora, and the Trinidad. Though the architecture of those churches has nothing remarkable, they are solidly built, and richly ornamented in the interior. The cathedral is two hundred and fifty feet long by seventy-five broad, and its walls are thirty-six feet high; four ranges of stone columns, each containing six, support the roof; the only public clock in the town, three years ago, was in the steeple of this church.

This town has five convents, of which three are for men, the Franciscans, Dominicans, and Brothers of the Order of Mercy. The church of the Dominicans has a very curious historical picture: it represents the Virgin Mary suckling a grey-bearded Saint Dominic. The following is the account of this miracle, as recounted by the sexton to those who visit the church: St. Dominic having had a violent pain in his breast, and his physician having ordered him woman's milk, the Virgin suddenly descended from Heaven and presented her breast to the saint, who, as it may be supposed, was cured in an instant. The sexton finishes his story by observing that the Virgin operated this miracle in acknowledgment of their founder's devotion for the rosary.

The priests of the oratory of St. Philip de Neri



have also a church : they are usefully occupied in the civilization of the aboriginal inhabitants.

The two monasteries of women are those of the Conception and Carmelites. A more useful and respectable association is the congregation of Las Educandas : it is a community of young ladies of good family and well educated, who though they do not make vows of chastity and confinement, as the others do, observe them much better, and occupy themselves in the education of young females.

The Archbishop of Caraccas has for suffragans the Bishops of Merida and Guiana : he had previous to the rupture of the treaty of Amiens a revenue of about sixty thousand dollars for his part of the tythes, without counting what accrued to him for the sale of dispensations, indulgences, bulls, &c. articles which raise his revenue to more than ninety thousand. In general those bishops, canons, monks, and nuns are richly endowed, well fed, and do not painfully tread the paths that conduct to Heaven amidst thorns and briars : it is, however, necessary to do them this justice, that they have neither the brutality nor intolerance of their brethren in Spain ; nor is it rare to find among them persons of elegant manners, learning and virtue.

The reader will not, perhaps, be a little surprised to learn, that the head of a government so important, the captain general, and immediate represen-

tative of the sovereign, formerly resided in a hired house, of which he had only the ground floor: the intendancy, the audiencia, tribunals, and military hospital, are also in rented houses. The contadaria, or treasury, a solid but mean building, and the barracks, which are vast and well built, are the only edifices that belong to the government.

This town has a college founded in 1778, by Antonio Gonzales d'Acuna, Bishop of Caraccas, and converted into a university in 1792, with the permission of the Pope! In this university reading and writing are first taught. Three professors teach enough of Latin to read mass, Aristotle's physics, and the philosophy of Scotus, which still prevailed at this school in 1808. A professor of medicine demonstrates anatomy, explains physiology, all the laws of animal life, the art of curing, &c. on a skeleton and some preparations in wax. If in this orthodox country a provision for instructing the profane arts and sciences has been neglected, it has not been so with the study of theology and canon law; five professors are occupied in teaching those sciences. One, only, the most learned, of course, is employed to defend the doctrine of Saint Thomas on the immaculate conception, against all heretics! No diploma can be obtained without having sworn to a sincere belief in this revered dogma!

The university has also a professor who teaches the Roman law, the Castilian laws, the code of the Indies, and all other laws. In short, a pro-



fessor of vocal church music forms part of this hierarchy of instruction, and teaches to the students of law and medicine, as well as to those of theology, to sing in time and harmony, the airs of the Roman ritual. By letters I have lately received from that country, I am informed that the leaders of the independent party have introduced into the courses of instruction, the study of the philosophy of Locke and Condillac, the physics of Bacon and Newton, pneumatic chymistry, and mathematics, to the great displeasure of certain persons, whose luxury and corpulence were maintained by the ignorance of their countrymen.

A town like Caraccas could not but require a theatre; and the one it has, is decorated with the finest ceiling in the world, which is the sky: the roof only covers the boxes, so that when it happens to rain, which is seldom the case in this country, those in the pit are drenched. Nothing can be more monotonous and contemptible than the acting of their players; yet this wretched performance is frequented by the inhabitants of all classes, even by the priests and monks, who go there in their religious habits.

The population of the town of Caraccas was forty-seven thousand two hundred and twenty-eight persons of all colours, in 1807; it amounted to fifty thousand souls in 1810; three hundred and forty-six thousand seven hundred and seventy-two persons of all colours then composed the popu-

lation of the other towns and the province of Caraccas, properly speaking, which makes a total of 496,772 inhabitants.

I ought here to rectify an error of almost all geographers in the political divisions of the late captain generalship of Caraccas or Venezuela. The Spanish collection entitled, *Viagero Universal*, and the *Geographical and Historical American Dictionary* of Colonel Alcedo, do not present the most sure and exact notions in the description of this part of the country. The late M. Depons is not only the first Frenchman, but the first European, who has made a good statistical table of this country: still his work is not without errors and negligences, some of which I shall notice.

Almost all European geographers confound the general government of Caraccas or Venezuela, with the province, of which the town of Saint Leon de Caraccas is the capital. This town was the residence of the president,\* captain general, intendant, and an *Audiencia* (a supreme administrative and judicial court,) on which depended the respective governors of the provinces of Cumana and New Andalusia, Maracaybo, Varinas, Guiana, and the Island of Trinidad.

It is not possible to be too clear and precise

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\* The captain-general used to be president ex officio of the Audiencia. The title of President was considered as superior to that of Captain General or Governor.



in the description of a country, as yet so little known, and respecting which there are confused and contradictory accounts. I shall therefore repeat what I have already stated, that when the Spaniards discovered this country, they found near the Lake of Maracaybo, a great number of Indian villages built on piles, which made them give it the name of Venezuela, in comparing it with Venice. This name soon extended to all the province, of which Coro became the capital. The town of Caraccas being subsequently made the metropolis of all the country that formed the captain-generalship of that name, the district of that town took the name of *Province of Venezuela*; which, though it be not, by its extent, the most considerable of the five that compose the general government of the Caraccas, now gives its name to the republic of the seven provinces that have so wisely shaken off the yoke of the regency of Cadiz.

When the district of Caraccas had taken the name of Venezuela, the country situated round the lake received that of Province of Maracaybo: the two provinces which were successively dismembered from those of Venezuela and Maracaybo, were called Varinas and Guiana. A portion of the country known by the name of New Andalusia, as also the Island of Margarita, formed part of the separate government of Cumana. The island of Trinidad was a sixth province or distinct government, depending on the

captain-generalship of Caraccas, until the English conquered it in February, 1797.

Venezuela is the national name adopted at present by the confederated provinces, and Caraccas is their metropolis: the province of Venezuela has taken the name of Province of Caraccas. This province is bounded on the west by the sea, on the north-west by that of Maracaybo, on the north by that of Cumana, and to the east and south-east by that of Varinas.

The commercial port of the province of Caraccas is La Guyra: it is a bay open to all winds, and an unsafe anchorage in stormy weather; but this port has the advantage of being only five leagues from Caraccas. La Guyra is built on the side of a mountain, which, in this climate, adds to the heat of the atmosphere: from the beginning of April, to the month of November, Farenheit's thermometer is usually at ninety degrees; and from the beginning of November to the end of March, it is generally at eighty-five or eighty-six. The humidity of the climate, added to the heat, produce annually inflammatory fevers, which degenerate, in twenty-four or thirty-six hours, into putrid fevers, that are chiefly detrimental to those who are newly arrived from Europe and the cold regions of America; for those who are seasoned to the climate, are seldom attacked, though they do not enjoy a good state of health there.

This town is badly built, but tolerably well



fortified; it had a population of seven thousand souls, in 1807, comprising a garrison of eight hundred men. There is but one church in it, and the rector is also chaplain of the garrison. La Guyra had not a municipal administration or *Cabildo*, before the revolution, like the greater part of the other towns in this country: it was governed by the commander of the fortress, who united in his person the civil and military authority, but there was an appeal from his sentences to the Royal Audiencia of Caraccas.

The greater part of the merchants of La Guyra are only the agents of those of Caraccas, of which the former is but the wharf; for scarcely are the goods landed, than they are transported to Caraccas on the backs of mules. The two towns are situated at about five leagues from each other: to go from La Guyra to Caraccas, the mountain of the Venta, above four thousand feet above the level of the sea, is ascended on mules; travellers rest on the plain at its summit, where there is a bad inn, but where it is always very cool. I found Fahrenheit's thermometer at seven degrees above the freezing point there on the 28th January. There is a very agreeable sensation experienced on this delightful summit, after leaving the burning atmosphere of La Guyra. The mountain is afterwards descended to go to Caraccas, situated considerably below the inn of the Venta: two hours are generally requisite to ascend, and one hour to descend the mountain.

To give an idea of the temperature of the town of Caraccas, and of the fluctuations of the thermometer in this place, I shall quote one day's observations of M. de Humboldt, for which I am indebted to his kindness.

$8\frac{1}{2}$	hours in the morning	$14\frac{9}{10}$	} between 70° and 78° Farenheit.
$9\frac{1}{2}$	- - -	16	
1	afternoon	$17\frac{1}{2}$	
$2\frac{1}{2}$	- - -	18	
7	- - -	$15\frac{1}{2}$	
11	- - -	14	

In the month of January of the same year Reaumur's thermometer was at Caraccas generally between seven and eight o'clock in the morning at 13° and 14°; between twelve o'clock and two, at 17° and 19°; and at eleven o'clock at night usually at 13°, and on certain days at 15° at the utmost. During this season it descends commonly to 12° and even 11°: it has sometimes been seen even below 10° half an hour before sunrise.

Porto Cavello is situated at a league to the west of Borburata, which was, for some time, the principal port of the colony: but it has been only a village since the maritime commerce was chiefly directed to La Guyra, and that the naval arsenals have been established at Porto Cavello. It is but an unhealthy place, yet one which any other government than the Spanish would have easily rendered healthy. There is, however, considerable trade carried on there, and although



it was the principal port in the government of Caraccas for the Spanish navy, in no other part was there so much contraband trade. More than half the produce of the province of Caraccas was carried there, and sold to the smugglers of Curaçoa and Jamaica, who paid for all that produce in Dutch and British merchandize, besides selling annually to the amount of one million three hundred thousand, to one million four hundred thousand dollars of those merchandizes, for which they were paid in specie. Porto Cavello is twenty-four leagues from La Guyra, and in  $10^{\circ} 28' N.$  latitude, and  $69^{\circ} 10' W.$  longitude.

The town of Valencia was founded in 1555, under the government of Villacinda: this place is situated at half a league from the magnificent Lake of Tacarigua, to which it has in vain endeavoured to give its European name, that is much less sonorous than the Caribbean. It is worthy of remark, that the indigenous names of the mountains, lakes, rivers, &c. are much more harmonious than those which the Europeans have wished to substitute for them: a few of those words, as the aboriginal inhabitants pronounce them, will prove the assertion; Tacarigoa, Maracaybo, Nik-karagoa, Ibirinocco\*, Naiagara, Ontario, Amana, &c.

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\* Of which the Spaniards have made Orinoco. Ibirinocco was also the name of the mountains where they supposed the sources of this river were.

The population of Valencia, which was only about six thousand five hundred persons in 1801, was more than ten thousand in 1810. The inhabitants are nearly all Creoles, the offspring of ancient Biscayan and Canary families. There is great industry and comfort in this town. It is as large as an European town of twenty-four to twenty-five thousand souls, because the greater part of the houses have only a ground floor, and many of them have gardens. Fifty years ago, its inhabitants passed for the most indolent in the country: they all pretended to descend from the ancient conquerors, and could not conceive how it was possible for them to exercise any other function than the military profession, or cultivate the land, without degrading themselves. Thus they lived in the most abject misery, on a singularly fertile soil. Their ideas have since completely changed; they have applied themselves to agriculture and commerce, and the grounds in the neighbourhood are now well cultivated. Valencia is the centre of a considerable commerce with Caraccas and Porto Cavello.

The town of Maracay, situated at the other extremity of the lake, was inhabited by a race of men, whose minds were never deranged by the frivolous and noxious pride of birth: almost all the inhabitants of the town, and of the neighbouring country, are of Biscayan origin, and therefore industry, comfort, cleanliness, and good morals are to be found generally throughout



this district. The grounds that encompass Maracay, are covered with numerous plantations of cotton, indigo, coffee and maize, and the heights with fields of wheat: in a radius of two leagues the vegetables of the temperate climes of Europe are cultivated as well as those of the tropics. Though Maracay had not the name of a city under the ancient Spanish government, because it had not a Cabildo, it contained nevertheless a population of nearly ten thousand persons.

Tulmaro is another town situated in one of the vallies which communicates with the valley of Aragoa: it is two leagues from Maracay, and is the residence of the administrators of the tobacco contract. This town is very well built; eight thousand inhabitants were calculated as its population in 1807: its district was then covered with plantations of tobacco, which was cultivated there on account of the government.

In going from Caraccas to Tulmaro, there is a town called Vittoria, which was once only a village of Caraccas Indians, whom the Spanish missionaries had converted to christianity and civilization; but, for a century past, a great many Europeans have established themselves there, who, by their lawful or clandestine connections with the native women, have produced a numerous and mongrel population. There are, however, many families, that deem themselves descended from European blood, without any mixture of that of Africans or of Indians, and

who place great importance on this absurd pretension. The town had, in 1807, a population of eight thousand persons. There are several other towns or villages in the vallies of Arragon, where the inhabitants cultivate all the tropical productions, as well as the wheat and fruits of Europe.

In 1807, this population was distributed on two hundred and thirty-seven plantations, and nearly two thousand houses in towns or villages: it consisted of,

	24,000 whites.
	18,000 mixed blood.
	6,500 Indians.
	4,000 slaves.
Total	<hr/> 52,500 persons. <hr/>

CORO.

The fortunate situation of Coro for trading with the neighbouring islands, and particularly with Porto Rico and St. Domingo, and not chance, as M. Depons has asserted, caused its scite to be chosen for the first settlement which the Spaniards founded on this part of terra firma. The tribe of Indians that inhabited it, were called Coriana. The Audiencia of St. Domingo sent Juan de Ampues there in 1529, in the capacity of governor, and principally with the view of restraining the robberies and cruelties of the Spanish traders who infested those



coasts. Scarcely had the country begun to recover under the administration that excellent of governor, than it fell under the tyranny of the Welsers.

There had been a bishopric and chapter established at Coro in 1532: the seat of government having been transferred to Caraccas in 1576, the bishop and his chapter were removed there in 1636. The chronicles of the country relate, that the canons of Coro hunted the Indians, to sell them for slaves, while others engaged in the profession of corsairs.

The environs of Coro are barren, but at three leagues from the town are hills, vallies and plains of some fertility. This town is situated on the Isthmus of Paragoana, whose inhabitants lead a pastoral life, occupying themselves entirely with the care of their flocks. Ten thousand persons of all colours, among whom there are scarcely two hundred slaves, form the population of the town. They still hold a considerable trade with Curaçoa in cattle, hides, and indigo, and even in cochineal, which last article comes from the district of Carora. According to the Deposito, the town of Coro is in  $11^{\circ} 9'$  North latitude, and  $69^{\circ} 35'$  West longitude.

The town of Caroro and its district contain a population of about ten thousand persons. This town appears under the name of San Juan Bautista del Portillo de Coropa, in the Dictionary of Alcedo. Carora, its real appellation, is

an Indian name. Formerly the inhabitants were entirely occupied in the care of a kind of wild cochineal, as fine as the Misteca. Though its soil is arid, there are numerous herds of oxen, horses, asses, mules, sheep, and goats; the dwarf deer of South America is also very common. The inhabitants breed cattle chiefly for the purpose of tanning the hides: a great number of them are shoemakers and sadlers, others are weavers and ropemakers. They make very handsome hammocks and excellent packthread with the fibres of the agave foetida or American aloe. They carry on a great trade in those articles with Maracaybo and Carthagena, from whence they are exported to the neighbouring colonies.

The inhabitants of Carora were very poor formerly, but they have become rich since undertaking the plan of grazing, and the tanning trade. Its sandy soil is covered with the *cactus opuntia* (Indian fig,) and other thorny plants; as also trees that produce aromatic gums and odoriferous balsams, to which they attribute great virtues; and of which many have not as yet been described by any botanist.

The little river of Morere, which, in the dry season, is scarcely sufficient for the necessities of the inhabitants, is the only one that waters this salubrious district. The government of the town is merely municipal, another cause of the industry of its inhabitants.



Carora is situated, according to the Spanish geographers, at fifteen leagues east of the Lake Maracaybo, and at ninety leagues west of Caraccas, and in the tenth degree of N. latitude. The town is well built, every thing indicating order and opulence. There are three handsome churches: the parish church, that of St. Denis the Areopagite, and the Franciscans, who have a convent there.

In going from Carora to Caraccas, is the town of Barquisimeto, situated on a plain: though in  $9^{\circ} 45'$  of N. latitude, it enjoys a very mild climate. I have been assured that when there is no wind, Reaumur's thermometer rises to  $28^{\circ}$  and  $29^{\circ}$ ; which I am inclined to doubt, on account of the elevation of its scite; besides, wheat grows in the vicinity of Barquisimeto. All the tropical productions are cultivated in the valleys which surround it, and they grow excellent coffee there. The town is well built, and has, with its district, a population of about fifteen thousand inhabitants. There is a fine parish church there, that contains a crucifix which has worked a great many miracles, and is at the same time an object of devotion with the people, and an abundant source of revenue to the clergy of the church. In the same town is a convent of rich Franciscan friars, who are esteemed great lovers of good cheer, also an hospital, where the poor are badly lodged and scan-

tily fed. This town is ninety leagues west from Caraccas, and one hundred north of Santa Fe de Bogota.

San Felipe, a century ago, was only a village, known by the name of Cocorote; a great number of Canarians and natives of the neighbouring districts, attracted by the fertility of its soil, having settled there, the company of Guipuscoa, some time before its dissolution, established stores for the purpose of trading with the interior. From that time this place gained a new aspect: handsome houses, streets regularly built, took the place of huts huddled together without order. The inhabitants of this district are reputed laborious and industrious: they have only priests, and no monks or miraculous images, as seen in the surrounding countries. They grow excellent cocoa, coffee, maize, rice, and a little cotton. This district is watered by the rivers Jarani and Arva, and by numerous rivulets; copper mines are also worked there.

Tocuyo is built in a valley more elevated than the plain of Barquisimeto: its climate is cool, even cold, from the month of November to April whilst the wind blows from the north. Its territory is adapted to all kinds of agriculture, and a great quantity of wheat is grown there, which is sent to different parts of the province. The wool of the Tocuyo sheep has a high reputation among the natives; I have seen very fine blankets and kerseymeres made of this wool. There are



also many tanneries where they tan leather tolerably well, and it forms a considerable branch of their commerce.

The inhabitants of Tocuyo are reputed very industrious; they bring salt from the salt works of Coro, to sell to the inhabitants of other parts of the province. It is said that they are very much given to suicide. This town is ninety leagues south-west of Caraccas, twenty north of Truxillo, and twenty-two from Coro; and according to the Spanish geographers, in  $9^{\circ} 35'$  N. latitude and  $70^{\circ} 30'$  West longitude.

Forty leagues further inland, on the borders of the province of Caraccas, towards that of Varinas, in a magnificent plain, is the handsome town of Guarare, founded in 1593: it is situated on the banks of a river of the same name, and between this and the Portuguese river, which is navigable, and falls into the Apure.

The district of Guanare is as well cultivated as a country can be, whose population is so scanty; for there are scarcely twenty thousand inhabitants. The cultivation of tobacco was formerly an abundant source of riches to them; but since it has been permitted only in certain cantons, and for the account of government, the inhabitants have applied to the culture of maize and alimentary roots, such as the potatoe, *solanum tuberosum*; the sweet potatoe, *convolvulus batata*; the yam, *discorea alata*, &c. They cultivate only as much sugar, coffee, and cocoa, as is ne-

cessary for their own consumption, their flocks being their chief wealth.

There is another branch of revenue for the priests of Guanare: it is the Madona de Comoroto, which on the 3d February, 1746, performed miracles, the particulars of which pious persons will find in the work of M. Depons. Guanare is ninety-three leagues south-west of Caraccas, in  $8^{\circ} 14'$  N. latitude, and  $72^{\circ} 5'$  West longitude, according to the Spanish geographers.

The town of Araure, twenty leagues westward of Guanare, is built between two branches of the river Aricagua; the right branch is navigable, its territory is watered by numerous rivulets, which would be deemed rivers in Europe. This little town is well built, and has a very handsome church, the temple of a miraculous Madonna, which, according to the tradition of the country, was found in 1702, under the bark of a tree, by a female mulatto named Margaret, who bartered it with the Capuchin Miguel de Palencia, for small images of the Virgin, reliquaries, &c. It appears, however, that it had not begun to work miracles, and enter into competition with the Virgin of Guanare, until 1757. The priests of Guanare declare that the Madona of Araure is only a Capuchin fraud, and has never performed a miracle: more charitably inclined than my friends of either places, I believe that



the two Madonas are equally worthy of the veneration of the faithful!

The inhabitants of Araure, as well as those of Guanare, are considered indolent, lazy, and much addicted to pleasure, which appears to be the distinguishing characteristics of the inhabitants of every country in the world, where miracles and superstition possess much influence. The town and its district have a population of about eleven thousand persons: the property of its inhabitants consists in flocks: they cultivate a little cotton, coffee and cocoa. Araure is, according to the Spanish geographers, in latitude  $9^{\circ} 15'$  North,  $70^{\circ} 20'$  West longitude.

San Luis de Cura is situated in a fertile valley, and yet but little cultivated; its inhabitants-occupying themselves entirely with the care of their flocks. The mountains surrounding it have a very picturesque appearance. The soil is clayey, and the water which the inhabitants drink, is reddish in rainy weather, but wholesome, at least they do not find any bad effects from it.

The church of San Luis has also a miraculous Madona, known by the name of Nuestra Senora de Los Valencianos, for having been found, as the priests say, in 1771, by an Indian, in the ravine of los Valencianos. This Madona has been the cause of a suit that made great noise in this part of the world, between the rector of San Luis, and that of San Sebastian de los Reyes. The latter pretended that the Madona belonged

to him, because the ravine in which it was found is situated in his parish; and the rector of San Luis alledged that he had bought the Madona of the Indian who discovered it. During thirty years that this strange law-suit continued, and which was contested on each side with all the venom of superstition, the poor Madona was abandoned in the garret of the episcopal palace of Caraccas, where she was so impotent as not to be able to prevent the vermin from corroding her, so as not to be distinguishable when the Archbishop of Caraccas, Don Francisco de Ibarra, a virtuous and benevolent prelate, reconciled the two rectors, and delivered her to him of San Luis de Cura; who, after having had her repaired by a painter and gilder, in which she was outraged by the worms, and purchased a magnificent wardrobe for the much injured relic, conducted her in triumph to his church, where she has not ceased to grant numerous miracles to the prayers of the faithful, especially that of removing sterility in females. As the rector of San Luis did not feel himself alone sufficient for the duties of his new office, he has been obliged to take some young clergymen of the neighbourhood as associates, whose ardent zeal is continually employed in giving to barren husbands and wives proofs of the miraculous power of their Madona.

San Luis de Cura is eight leagues south-west from the Lake Tacarigua, and twenty-two leagues south-west of Caraccas. San Sebas-



tian de los Reyes is a little town on the banks of the Rio Guarica, about seven leagues from San Luis, and eighteen from Caraccas. The territory of this district is fertile, yet there is only maize cultivated there: its pasturage, however, feeds many cattle.

Nirgoa is built on the ruins of the fortified village of Palmas, which was founded in 1553, by Diego Montesqui, to protect the works of the copper mines that he had discovered in the mountains, among which Nirgoa, is now situated, at ten leagues from the Lake Tacarigua. The Indian Giraharas who were cruelly annoyed by Montesqui, burnt and destroyed those establishments. The following year the government ordered another officer, Diego Paradas, to rebuild that village, under the name of Nirgoa. The latter, instead of pacifying the Indians, and treating them with justice and humanity, hunted them, in order to procure slaves for working the mines. But the Indians having vanquished their oppressors, forced them, in 1556, to evacuate this post. A person named Romera was sent there some months afterwards, and employed negroes to work the mines: the Indians drove him away also, as they had done his predecessors.

The licenciado Bernades was forced to evacuate Nirgoa in 1557. Francisco Faxardo caused a great number of houses to be built, and fortified this town in 1560; but the Spaniards still continuing to hunt the Indians, to procure slaves

and women, the latter never omitted to attack their oppressors, whenever they thought themselves sufficiently strong to carry on the war, which ended in 1628, by the total extermination of the tribe of Giraharas.

The town and district of Nirgoa are inhabited by Zamboes,\* a race produced by the union of the negro and Indian. Though in the Spanish and Portuguese colonies, persons tainted with African blood, (I beg pardon for this American expression,) were not despised, as in those of other European nations, still they were not held in that degree of estimation in which families were, who had the reputation of springing from the union of European and Indian blood. The individuals of this race, the Mestizos, were, it is true, declared competent to occupy civil and military employments, but they were but rarely promoted to them. Even the Creoles, who deemed themselves descended from European families, without any mixture of indigenous or African blood, were seldom elevated to important posts, and were treated by the Spaniards born in Europe with great haughtiness, and as an inferior class : almost all the honourable and lucrative situations in the civil and military departments, were reserved for Europeans. But the kings of Spain gave diplomas of whites (a kind of scandalous whitewashing)

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\* The word Zambo in Spanish means a man who has bowed legs: a marked characteristic in the formation of most negro tribes.



to certain persons who had rendered, or were supposed to have rendered important services to the state. It is about fifty years since King Charles III. whitewashed by wholesale, in an edict, his loyal and faithful subjects, the Zamboes of the town of Nirgoa.

Nirgoa enjoying the privileges of a city, has in consequence, an elective municipal council, as other Spanish cities. It may be readily supposed that the first use the Zamboes made of those privileges was, to elect people of colour to the municipal places. This favour or justice of the sovereign so inflated the minds of the Zamboes, they became so haughty and arrogant to the whites, that the latter have deserted this district, which is no longer inhabited than by tallow-coloured whites; who according to the assertions of the citizens of Caraccas, are the most vicious of mankind. In this metropolis, the word Zambo is synonymous with worthless, idler, liar, impious, thief, villain, assassin, &c. Of ten crimes that may be committed in the province, eight are said to be done by the Zamboes. M. Depons, who resided a long time at the town of Caraccas, coincides in the unfavourable opinion of its inhabitants towards the Zamboes, and I confess that I cannot recollect the name of one honest man, when I think of the numerous individuals of this crossed breed whom I had occasion to know and employ either during my residence at Trinidad, or in the course of my travels. Still this afflicting pheno-

menon may be explained. These individuals are born of clandestine and adulterous unions, of natives who have contracted only the vices of civilization, and of African slaves: what can be expected of children born of such parents, whose minds are totally neglected, and in a climate that invites to sloth and indolence? But there is another observation, which, I think, should fix the attention of learned zoologists, and excite them to research: why is it that individuals proceeding from a mixture of African and indigenous American blood, have a bodily strength, finer forms, more intellectual faculties, and moral energy, than the Negro or Indian? Why, although the white be, in general, superior in strength of body, mental powers, and in moral force, to the aboriginal American and to the negro; why, I ask, are the individuals born of the union of a white with an Indian woman (the Mestizos, for instance,) inferior in mental and corporeal qualities to the Zamboes? Why are the Mestizos generally distinguished by fine figures, agreeable countenances, and the mildness and docility of their dispositions? Why is the mulatto son of a white and a negress, superior to the Zambo in intellectual faculties, but his inferior in physical? Why is it, that when those races are mixed, their progeny is remarkable for a more healthy and vigorous constitution, and for more vital energy, than the individuals born in the same climate, of indigenous European or African



blood, without mixture? These are facts by no means unworthy of the physiological researches of Cuvier, Gall, Blumenbach, Soëmmering and Humboldt.

San Juan Bautista del Poa, is situated at fifty leagues south-west of Caraccas. It is the principal town of a district which is inhabited only by shepherds and their flocks. The population of the town and its territory, is about ten thousand persons. The river Pao, which runs south of the town, formerly discharged itself into the Lake Tacarigua; but an earthquake and inundation have altered its course: it now flows into the Apure. If a canal were to be cut from the Lake Tacarigua to the Pao, it would be easy to establish a communication from Caraccas to Guiana, and even as far as the Brazils. Trade will, hereafter, derive great advantages from those internal communications.

San Carlos is a little town founded by the first missionaries in Venezuela. It is situated on the border of the small river Aguaré, and, according to the Spanish geographers, is in  $9^{\circ} 20'$  N. latitude. The river runs into one of the branches of the Apure. The inhabitants of this district originate chiefly from the Canary Islands, and are considered laborious and industrious. They cultivate all that is necessary for their maintenance, which is maize and the roots of the country, as also coffee and indigo; but their principal wealth consists in their flocks. It is a

very handsome town, and contained more than fifteen thousand inhabitants in 1807. San Carlos is sixty leagues south-west of Caraccas, and twenty-five from Lake Tacarigua.

Baria is the name of a little town placed at five leagues to the east of San Carlos, on the bank of the river Sarare, which communicates with the river Apure by the Portuguese river. It is a canton of pasturage and flocks, and contains six thousand inhabitants.

Calaboso was formerly a village of Indians, but the Guipuscoa company having deemed it expedient to establish a staple there, towards the middle of the last century, the village became changed into a well-built town. Its territory is covered with flocks. This country was infested, in 1802, by a band of robbers, who employed themselves in hunting the horses, oxen, mules, &c. for their hides, which they took to Trinidad for sale. It was the only instance that I had ever heard of a band of plunderers in the Spanish colonies. It is situated in  $8^{\circ} 40'$  N. latitude, is fifty-two leagues from Caraccas, and on the border of the Guarico, a fine navigable river that runs into the Apure. Fifteen thousand individuals, of all casts, compose the population of its territory.

Such is the description of the principal towns in the province of Caraccas (formerly the province of Venezuela, properly speaking) and of their territories. The population of those towns is



not composed, as those of the greater part of Europe, which are not essentially commercial or manufacturing, of proprietors and annuitants, who do nothing more than spend their revenues, and of traders. The inhabitants of those towns and villages of Venezuela are generally farmers, who cultivate their lands, or keep numerous flocks and herds in the surrounding countries. Priests, physicians, *escrivanos* (lawyers, who are, at the same time, barristers, notaries, attornies, and even bailiffs,) and a few shopkeepers form the remainder of the population. There are nothing but forests and natural meadows (*savanas*) in the intervals that separate the territory of a town or village from the neighbouring towns or villages, which are generally ten or fifteen leagues from each other. There are also found occasionally, usually at ten leagues distance, missions or villages of half civilized Indians.

A statement of the agricultural productions, flocks, &c. of Caraccas, and the other confederated provinces or states, will be found in another chapter. It has been already stated that the population of the province of Caraccas in the year 1810, was 496,772.

## CHAP. II.

CUMANA.—Historical and Geographical Sketch of the Province.—Privileges granted by Pope Alexander VI.—Conduct of the first Spanish Invaders.—Retaliation of the Indians.—Barthelemy de Las Casas.—Ocampo.—Biographical Sketch of Las Casas.—Extract from his History.—City of Cumana.—Its Prosperity under Emparan.—Its Population.—Public Amusements.—Anecdote of M. de Humboldt.—System of Education.—Price of Provisions.—Manners.—Trade.—Defences and Fortifications.—Gulph of Caricao.—Marine Birds.—Singular Mode of catching them.—Carupana.—Valley of Yaguaparo.—CUMANACOA.—Grotto of Guacharo.—Indian Superstitions.—NEW BARCELONA.—Its Productions and Trade.—Conception del Pas.—Remarks.—GUIANA.—Derivations.—San Tome de Augustura.—State of the Indian Tribes.—Mode of recognizing Flocks.—Wild Horses, Mules, &c.—Curious Account of them.—PROVINCE OF VARINAS.—Account of the Inhabitants.—Maracaybo.—Population.—Island of Margarita.—An Original.—Decoration of the Virgin and Anecdote.—Pompatar.—A Sermon.—Theological Disputation.—Bulls and Indulgences.—Faxardo.—Margarita described.—Assoneion.—Fisheries.—Departure.

I HAVE already said that Alfonso Ojeda reconnoitred the Lake of Maracaybo in 1499. In the month of July of the preceding year, Christopher Columbus, in his third voyage to the new world, discovered the Island of Trinidad, and the countries now known by the name of Guiana, Cape de Paria, Cumana, &c. His design was to proceed as far as the Equator; but frequent calms



prevented its execution, and the currents carried him as far as that mouth of the Orinoco, or rather the Gulf of Paria, situated between the Island of Trinidad and the continent, and to which he gave the name of Las Bocas del Drago, or Dragon's Mouths; it was in this place that the above great man was convinced, for the first time, of the existence of that continent which ought to bear his name. "Such a prodigious quantity of fresh water" (the waters of the Orinoco,) said Columbus to his men, "can be discharged only by a river of very long course; the land which possesses so much water, must be a continent, and not an island." Ferdinando Columbus informs us that his father coasted the continent as far as to the west of the Testigos islands, and then returned to San Domingo.

Scarcely had the news of this discovery reached Spain, than the crafty adventurers Americo Vespucci, Alfonso Ojeda, Christopher Guerra, &c. obtained permission to trade on those coasts. I have already mentioned the two former. Christopher Guerra traded with the natives of Cape de Paria, Margarita, Cubagua, and Cumanagoto. He bartered trifles for pearls, gold, dying woods, balsams, &c. From Barcelona, Guerra went to Coro, where he found the natives hostile, and they refused to treat with him.

Guerra having returned to Spain with a rich cargo, the rumour of his success incited the mer-

chants of all the ports to make speculations to those countries; but Charles V. having given permission, by an edict, to take, as slaves, all the Indians who should embarrass the trade, or oppose the taking possession of the countries discovered by Columbus, this traffic soon changed into a horrible piracy.

It is well known that Pope Alexander VI. who, owing to the besotted prejudices of those times, was king of kings, had divided, in 1493, the discoveries made, or to be made in the new world, between the Kings of Spain and Portugal. Gunpowder, tortures, and slavery, were the means employed, at first, to force the aboriginal inhabitants to enter the church of the sovereign pontiffs: who, at that period, tyrannized over monarchs and their ignorant people, dishonoured the name of Christian by their infamous conduct, and disfigured the benevolent religion of Jesus Christ by introducing into his worship the superstitions of paganism, the absurdities of their own imagination, and the intolerance of the first disciples of Mahomet. Consuming with a thirst of gold, inflamed by an ignoble ambition, and misled by a sanguinary fanaticism, the war which those adventurers waged in the new world acquired the superstitious character of the crusades without possessing their heroism.

Columbus had taken out missionaries on his second voyage of discovery. That extraordinary man, whose virtues have not been sufficiently



celebrated, had chosen for converting the natives to Christianity and civilization, not ferocious fanatics, but enlightened and benevolent ecclesiastics. A short time afterwards, Cordova, whom the history of the Spanish missions represents as a man endowed with every virtue, obtained permission from Charles V. to preach the gospel in the country of Cumana. His health not allowing him to undertake that voyage, he sent his brother there, Francisco de Cordova, and Juan Garcias; those two missionaries arrived at Cumana in 1512. The mildness of their manners gained them the confidence of the Indians, who considered them divine beings.

Pirates continually sailed from the islands of San Domingo and Porto Rico, under the name of conquerors. One of those vessels arrived at Cumana, whilst the Fathers Cordova and Garcias were occupied with the conversion of the Indians. The captain of the pirates landed under pretence of trading with the natives, whom the humanity of the missionaries had reconciled to the Spanish name. The chief pirate invited the cacique with his family, to dine aboard his vessel, they went according to the invitation, accompanied by a great number of Indians: scarcely had they reached the ship, than the pirate set sail for San Domingo.

This act of villainy raised all the Indians of the country: they resolved to massacre the missionaries, whom they accused of being accomplices of the

pirates. The missionaries, after having declared their innocence, promised to despatch a boat immediately to San Domingo, to demand their chief and countrymen: on this condition their lives were spared; but with the assurance, that they should be put to death, if in four months the captives were not set at liberty. The pirates, however, having refused to deliver them up, the fathers Cordova and Garcias were killed. Las Casas relates, that many more missionaries were murdered in the island of Trinidad, and other parts of the province of Cumana, because the Spanish pirates had carried off the natives. In that age of proselytism, those terrible examples made no impression on men who sighed with ardour for the crown of martyrdom. New missionaries went to Cumana, and the pirates not desisting from their incursions on the coasts, to make captives of the Indians, the latter regularly made reprisals on the missionaries, and put them to death. In 1519, all the Spaniards, who were settled in that country, were destroyed.

It was then about six years since the worthy Las Casas had travelled over the colonies to preach humanity to his ferocious countrymen. It is impossible to read without shuddering, the recitals made by the virtuous Bishop of Chiapa, of the cruelties committed in those regions, the massacres of millions of Indians, immolated by fanaticism and avarice.

Las Casas had gone to the new world at the



age of thirteen years, with his father, at the very time of its discovery. Interested by the mildness of the Indians, he entered into holy orders, for the purpose of effecting their conversion; but as he was naturally endowed with a generous and feeling heart, he thought that his time would be better employed in pleading the cause of those unfortunate beings at the court of his sovereign, which drew from his criminal cotemporaries those absurd calumnies, that all who have seriously studied the history of those times, are disgusted in finding so flippantly repeated by historians, otherwise respectable. "He was," says Raynal, "continually seen flying from one hemisphere to the other, to console the people, and humanize their tyrants. The inutility of his efforts at length convinced him that he could never obtain any thing for the settlements already formed, and he therefore proposed to establish a colony on a new basis."

In 1519, he arrived at Porto Rico with three hundred Castilian labourers, and a few days afterwards departed for Cumana, to found his new colony there. Charles V. had then given him the title of governor of Cumana: knowing that his countrymen were held in horror by the natives, he contrived to distinguish his colonists by a particular dress, decorated with a cross, in order that the Indians might make a distinction between them and other Spaniards.

Soon after the arrival of Las Casas at Cumana,

Gonzalo Ocampo was sent there by the audiencia of St. Domingo, in the capacity of military commander, and to revenge the massacres which the Indians had committed on his countrymen. When Ocampo appeared on the coast at the entrance of the Gulf of Cariaco, he received the visits of several Indians, and after having caressed them for some moments, that he might attract a greater number on board his ships, he had them hung up to the yards, after which he landed with his artillery, and shot all the natives who fell into his power. He refused to deliver the government of the country to Las Casas: the latter, after having lodged his colonists in a kind of fort surrounded with palisades, embarked for St. Domingo, in order to inform the audiencia of the conduct and rebellion of Ocampo, who soon followed him, leaving all his people in the small island of Cubagua. The Indians, who could not conceive that there were honest men among the Spaniards, attacked the colonists of Las Casas by night, and massacred all those who were not able to save themselves by escaping to Cubagua; after which they exterminated the other Spaniards who were scattered through the province.

The audiencia of St. Domingo sent, in 1523, Diego Castillon to Cumana, as governor, and with a force sufficient to protect him from the vengeance of the Indians. The Spanish historians represent him as a chief equally prudent,



resolute and humane ; who was capable, at once of restraining the disposition which his countrymen had for plunder, and that of the natives to revenge themselves for so many cruelties. However, it appears from the accounts of cotemporary writers, that, as before, the Spaniards were always in a state of war with the original inhabitants. Now, those who have had the means of studying the character of the latter, know that they are never the aggressors, and that the Indians have on no occasion taken arms against the whites, except when forced to do so by some great outrage, or enormous oppressions.\*

I have long resided in the neighbourhood of

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\* I hope I shall not be accused of inconsistency on the reader's perusing what I bring forward in a future chapter relative to the Caribs of St. Vincent's massacre of the white inhabitants of that island, of whom they had no reason to complain. But those pretended Caribs were Zamboes, men half civilized, who had been seduced by interested whites to commit those hostilities. And if the detractors of the Indians should oppose to me the frequent incursions of the savages of North America against the citizens of the United States, I would answer, that the attacks of those Indians, are *always* reprisals for cruelty or injustice committed by some dastardly American.†

† The recent conduct of the American Government, and of its blood-thirsty general, which mark both with a character of indelible infamy, fully proves the exact justice of the author's remark. But it is hoped Great Britain is fast approaching that period, when such a monster as Mr. Jackson will not be able to hang Englishmen with impunity!!—ED.

savages, have had daily intercourse with them, and I declare that I have never known a single instance wherein an Indian was the aggressor in a quarrel with a white man, or that he had acted unjustly towards one, without having been driven to it, or led on by a white, mulatto, or a negro.

But to return to the situation of the province of Cumana during the government of Diego Castillon, it appears, that there was less anarchy and pillage under this governor than during the administrations of his predecessors.

The virtuous Las Casas, who has left us a hideous portrait of the history of those times, would certainly not have omitted to mention Castillon with respect, if he had been the protector of the Indians. The Bishop of Chiapa has not transmitted to us the names of the execrable beings whose crimes he recounts, and the dates are too negligently placed in his history to serve as guides. As I believe that his account of the injustice and crimes committed against the Indians on the pearl coast (the coast of Cumana,) may be placed as well to the time of Castillon, as to that of his predecessors, I hope to gratify my readers by the following extract from the celebrated bishop's history.

“The Spaniards carried off from those coasts (the provinces of Cumana and Venezuela) more than two millions of men, to transport them to



the Islands of San Domingo and Porto Rico; where the greater part of them perished in the mines, or from the hardships to which they were otherwise subjected. It is a circumstance deserving compassion, and capable of affecting the greatest barbarians, that this coast, which was once so populous, is now absolutely deserted. It has been remarked, by intelligent persons, that a third of the slaves taken by the Spaniards on board their ships, die during the voyage, without speaking of those whom they kill when they break into the houses, to carry off those unhappy beings. The object of the Spaniards in committing those violences, is to enrich themselves by any means: they require a great number of slaves in order to amass a large sum of money: they lay in a very small stock of provisions and water for all those persons in their vessels, to avoid being at too much expence for the subsistence of those poor Indians: scarcely is there sufficient to maintain the Spaniards who work the ships; wherefore, it happens that the Indians worn out with hunger and thirst, die miserably, and a great portion of them is thrown into the sea, in order to save the remainder. A pilot of a vessel informed me, that in sailing from the Island of Lucayos to St. Domingo, the passage being about seventy leagues, he had no occasion to use a compass, or observe the stars, for steering his vessel, as he assured me that the dead bodies of

Indians served to track his course, and that he thereby arrived in due time without missing his destined port.

“ When the Indians arrive at the island where they are destined to be sold, no one can look at them without feelings of pity, unless a mere barbarian ; men, women, and children are seen quite naked, wasted by hunger and fatigue, scarcely able to support themselves, and fainting from languor and debility : they are formed into flocks like sheep, the husband separated from his wife, the children from their fathers and mothers : they are parcelled into gangs of tens and twenties, and lots are drawn to decide to whom they shall belong in the division. Thus it is that the pirates behave, who arm and equip vessels to ravish the unhappy Indians from their native homes, to enrich themselves at their cost, by reducing them to slavery. When the lot falls on a gang in which there is an old or sick person, he to whom it is destined, generally speaks thus : why do you give me that old fellow who is good for nothing, and a dead loss to me ? what shall I do with this sick man, who will be only an expence to me, and whose disease makes him completely useless ? By this it may be seen what little value the Spaniards place on the Indians, and how badly they fulfil the precepts of Christian charity ; since they love neither God nor their neighbour ; on which, however, depend the law and the prophets.



“ Nothing more cruel or detestable can be imagined than the tyranny which the Spaniards exercise in collecting and entrapping those poor Indians, when they go in quest of slaves, to employ them in the pearl fishery : the pains of Hell can alone be compared to what they inflict on the sufferers : those experienced in the mines from whence gold is extracted, are much less agonizing, though they are also horrible. They force them to dive in the sea in the depth of five or six fathoms ; there they swim about to collect the oysters in which pearls are found ; they come up to the surface of the water with nets full of those oysters, to breathe and avoid suffocation : if they happen to stay there a little too long, an inexorable Spaniard, who is near them in a small boat, flogs them dreadfully and loads them with stripes : he seizes them by the hair to force them to plunge into the water again and renew the fishery. They are fed with a morsel of fish and bread that is dry and without nourishment ; even of this, they do not receive enough to satisfy their hunger. They have no other bed than the hard ground, on which they sleep in chains, to prevent their escape. They frequently drown themselves at this fishery, or are devoured by sea monsters, insomuch that there is nothing more heard of them.

“ It is easy to perceive by what I have said, that the precept of charity is badly observed in the

pearl fishery, since those unhappy slaves are exposed to such imminent danger of perishing; the avarice of the Spaniards, whose sole object is gain, is the reason that they never take the trouble to instruct their slaves, or administer the sacrament to them: they tax them with so much labour that they die in a short time; for it is impossible for men to continue long under water, and bear the hardships which they suffer. The intensity of the cold is such, that it causes them to vomit blood, and they often die of it, because they have their stomachs too much oppressed, being obliged to retain their breath so long under water; besides that the excessive cold they endure, causes a flux of blood. They have naturally black hair, but their fatigues cause its colour to change, and it becomes similar to that of the sea-wolf. The foam of the sea coagulates and so attaches to their shoulders, that they resemble monsters more than men. The Spaniards have destroyed by the labours of this fishery, all the inhabitants of Lucayas, who were the most expert and accustomed to this occupation. That is the reason why they sold Indians of the country, at fifty or a hundred crowns each. The Lucayans have an astonishing facility in swimming and diving: such of the natives of other provinces also, as could be caught, were employed in this fishery, and an infinity of them were lost in it.”\*

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\* Vide the Discovery of the West Indies by B. de Las Casas,



Whatever may have been the conduct of the governor Castillon towards the Indians, he was the real founder of the town and colony of Cumana. Gonzales Ocampo, it is true, is the reput-

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Bishop of Chiapa, &c. Having had occasion to mention this celebrated man so frequently, I hope my readers will be gratified by a short sketch of his valuable life, which was spent in a constant series of the most active benevolence and exalted humanity.

Bartholomew de Las Casas, Bishop of Chiapa in Mexico, was born of a noble family in Seville, A. D. 1469, according to some historians, and in 1474, according to others. At the age of nineteen he went to St. Domingo with his father Antonio de Las Casas, who accompanied Christopher Columbus in his first voyage to the new world. On his return to Spain, he adopted the ecclesiastical profession, and afterwards entered into the fraternity of Dominicans, in order to become a missionary for the conversion of the Indians. In 1533 he lived at the convent of St. Dominic, in the Island of St. Domingo, where he occupied himself in preaching the gospel to the Indians, and humanity to their insatiable and ferocious tyrants. The most faithful and impartial historian of that period, Oviedo Valdes, a Spanish officer, who passed nearly all his life in America, informs us that there was, in 1519, an insurrection of the Indians caused by a Spaniard having violated the wife of the Cacique Don Henry who had embraced christianity. This cacique having in vain demanded justice on the ravisher of his wife, from Peter de Vellido, Lieutenant of the Admiral Jacomes Columbus, retired with his people to the mountains of Bcoruko, from whence he made war against the Spaniards for nearly fourteen years. Peace was re-established in 1533, and was principally the work of the missionary Las Casas. "At that time," says Oviedo, "among other pious monks who resided in the monastery of St. Dominic, was Friar B. de Las Casas, a learned man of good life and doctrine. He had undertaken, being a secular priest, and whilst he was called the licentiate B. de Las Casas, an

ed founder, because he had made a settlement there in 1520; but that was destroyed by the natives, who were almost continually at war with the Spaniards until 1656, at which period the

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affair which irritated great numbers against him, and of which I shall give an account in **Book XIX.**" It will soon be seen what this affair was, truly glorious for Las Casas, who awakened against himself the hatred of the robbers that devastated the New World, and which furnished a pretence for their calumnies, repeated by some historians. Oviedo, though a conquistador, finishes the twelfth chapter of his sixth book, by doing justice to the virtues and knowledge of Las Casas. He relates how this worthy missionary penetrated into the forests and among the mountains, to reconcile the Cacique Henry to the Spaniards; how he concluded a peace between them, which, unfortunately, was not of long duration, and which was followed by the extermination of almost all the natives. This is the affair which had drawn on Las Casas so much hatred and calumny. Previous to entering the order of Dominicans he had presented to Charles V. several memorials in favour of the unhappy Indians. The offers he made for mitigating their fate having been useless, he projected the founding of a colony on principles very different from those which his countrymen practiced. He obtained leave from the emperor to be sent to Cumana in the quality of governor. Having arrived at Porto Rico in the beginning of 1519, with three hundred Castilian labourers, a short time afterwards he went to Cumana, to establish his colonists there. Convinced that his countrymen must have been held in horror by the natives, he invented the mode of distinguishing his colonists by a particular dress, decorated with a white cross, in order that they might not be confounded with other Spaniards. To gain the affection of the natives, by acting according to the benevolent spirit of the gospel, and respecting their persons and properties, was the plan of Las Casas and the worthy men who accompanied him. Unfortunately, a short time before his arrival at Cumana, some Spanish pirates who took the name of conquistadores, had



latter renounced the plan of converting them with muskets and scaffolds. From that time the Jesuits and other missionaries, with only the arms of perseverance and persuasion, have congregated

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made incursions on the coast of Trinidad, Venezuela, and Cumana, from whence they carried off the Indians, whilst they bartered with, and made feasts for them. The Indians revenged themselves by exterminating all the Spaniards whom they could seize. When Las Casas arrived at Cumana with his followers, Gonzalo de Ocampo, who had been sent there by the governor of St. Domingo, in the capacity of military commander, refused to acknowledge his authority. Las Casas, after having placed his men in a fort surrounded with palissades, went to St. Domingo, in order to inform the governor general of the Indies, of the conduct and rebellion of Ocampo. That officer caused the natives to rise *en masse*, by his exactions, treachery and cruelties; and as they could not believe there were worthy men among the Spaniards, they attacked the companions of Las Casas, as well as the satellites of Ocampo, and massacred all those who were not able to save themselves in the small Island of Cubagua. It is not necessary to have a profound knowledge of the human heart, to conceive that this catastrophe was a subject of triumph for those base and perverse men who founded their fortunes on the slavery of the Indians. Las Casas was not discouraged, he was seen continually hastening from one hemisphere to the other, going from America to Spain, and returning from Spain to America, to plead the cause of the unfortunate Indians: no wonder, therefore, if so much zeal and virtue irritated their oppressors against him.

There was another ecclesiastic, Sepulveda, canon of Salamanca, the theologian and historiographer to Charles V. who composed a work entitled, *Democrates Secundus, seu de justis belli causis*, &c. or in other words, "Democrates the second, or of the just causes of war; an inquiry into the legality of attacking the Indians with armies, to usurp their lands, properties and temporal goods, and even to kill them in case of resistance; in order that

them in villages called missions ; they have given them some ideas of Christianity, and induced them to acquire a taste for architecture and the elementary arts of a social state. Europeans have been enabled to settle among them, and

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being thus stripped and subjected, they may be more easily converted to the faith by missionaries." Charles V. prohibited this libel from being printed ; but it was circulated at Rome with the approbation of the Pope, and the monks sent it to Spain, in defiance of the sovereign authority. Las Casas, who was then Bishop of Chiapa, refuted this odious work by a tract which bears the noble stamp of his character ; it is entitled, *Brevissima relacion de la destruicion de las Indias*, in quarto, Seville, 1552. The ferocious canon did not deem himself conquered ; he demanded a public conference with Las Casas, and continued to maintain in his discourses and writings, that according to the laws of nations, Charles V. might force the Indians to acknowledge him for their sovereign ; and that according to the laws of the Romish church, it was a duty to exterminate whoever refused to embrace its religion. Charles V. appointed Domingo de Soto, his confessor, to examine this great process ; but that monarch, exhausted with care and business, never decided the question : so that the Indians continued to be hunted, exterminated, and crammed into the mines ; it is asserted that nearly fifteen millions of them perished in less than ten years.

There is an absurd accusation which has long weighed heavily on the memory of Las Casas, from the sole assertion of Herrera, who has written the History of the New World, with great talent, no doubt, but with incorrectness and partiality : he accuses Las Casas himself, of having advised the Spaniards to enter into the negro slave trade, in order to substitute them for the Indians, working the mines, &c. The Senator, Gregoire, formerly Bishop of Blois, has victoriously refuted this calumny, in a tract entitled, *An Apology for B. de las Casas*, inserted in the fourth volume of the Transactions of the Class of Moral and Political Sciences of the Institute. Like him, I have consulted all the Spanish and Portu-



form establishments there. History will record, that the missionaries of the Romish church began to have success among the natives, only since it has become less intolerant.

The town of Cumana, now a commercial place

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guese writers of that period, as well as the English who have written on commerce, and it results from this examination, that the accusers of the Bishop of Chiapa, Raynal, de Pauw, Bryan Edwards, &c. and even the illustrious Robertson, have all written on the faith of Herrera, or on that of Father Charlevoix, who, whilst he wrote on the subject of the Spanish colonies, merely translates Herrera without quoting him. Herrera wrote thirty years after the death of Las Casas, and he displays much enmity to that great man. He quotes no public act, no document in favour of his accusation: not one of the writers who were contemporaries of Las Casas said a word of it, though many of them were his enemies, and had endeavoured to render him odious and contemptible. Sepulveda would not have failed to avail himself of such a fact, in the famous conference which he held at Valladolid with Las Casas, had it been only to prove him inconsistent. Remesal, the author of the history of Chiapa and Guatemala, is also silent on this matter. Lopez de Gomara, in his *Historia general de las Indias*, defames the Bishop of Chiapa; but though Gomara speaks of the Negroes, he does not impute to Las Casas the crime of having advised the trade in them. Don Juan Lopez, Bishop of Monopoli, and a Dominican, who has written a history of his order, eulogizes Las Casas, and says not a word of Negroes. The Abbé Racine, who is deemed a severe critic, speaks in the highest praise of him, in his *Ecclesiastical History*; nor does he mention the story of the slave trade, any more than the preceding authors.

In short, there exist of Las Casas, in the library of Mexico, three volumes of manuscripts in folio, of which there is a copy in the library of the Academy of Madrid. These are his memoirs, his official and familiar letters, and other political and theological

of the first rank in the new world, was, forty years ago, only a miserable village, which received annually two or three small vessels from Spain, that divided the trade of the country with the

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works. So far from finding, in all those writings, a word from whence it might be inferred, that he had recommended the slavery of the negroes to be substituted for that of the Indians, it is seen that in three or four places where he had occasion to mention the negro slaves, he commiserated their sufferings as he did those of the Indians.

How is it that the historians, who have repeated and transmitted the calumny of Herrera, have been ignorant that many years before the birth of Las Casas, and the discovery of the New World, the Portuguese navigators were accustomed to purchase and steal black slaves on the coast of Africa, to sell them to their countrymen and to the Spaniards?

Oviedo, book IV. chap. IV. mentions a revolt of the Iolof negroes, which took place at St. Domingo in 1522, and which began on the plantation of the Admiral Jacomo Columbus. This exact and even triflingly minute writer, does not mention when and how those negroes had been introduced; and the cause of his silence is easily explained: it was, that the Spaniards having been accustomed to the services of Negro slaves, previous to the discovery of the new world, took them there along with themselves. In this they merely followed the bad example of the ancients, the nations of India, the Greeks, the Macedonians of the time of Alexander, and the Romans.

To judge therefore from the above facts, it is evident that Las Casas never advised the slave trade; and that thus his memory should be handed down to posterity, pure and without stain; that we should look upon him as one of those extraordinary men, who received from nature a superior mind, undaunted courage, and a gift still more rare, that of sympathising in the misfortunes of his fellow creatures: privileged and beneficent beings, who appear occasionally on earth to console men of worth for partaking the name of man with rogues who cheat, cowards who dishonour,



Dutch and English smugglers. When the edict of King Charles III. dated the 12th November, 1778, vulgarly called that of free trade, and which put an end to the monopoly of the Guipuscoa Com-

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and the wicked who oppress it ; true philanthropists, who no more resemble certain mountebanks and hypoerites, who have in our days usurped that name, than copper resembles gold !

Las Casas was a theologian, publicist and distinguished historian ; he has been accused of exaggeration in the recitals he made of the crimes committed by the conquerors of the New World. The Abbé Clavigero, at the end of the second volume of his History of Mexico, seems to be astonished that unreserved credit is given to the relation of Las Casas ; and yet he did not abstain from retracing, throughout his whole history, the cruelties and injustice of Cortes, Alvaredo, and the other Spanish chiefs. He represents Mexico, Tlascala, and the neighbouring states, as very populous at the time of the conquest. Clavigero agrees on this point with Cortes, who wrote to Charles V. that he had subjected to his arms, and united to his crown, states more populous, and larger cities, than his states and cities in Spain : which has caused the learned and judicious Count Carli to say in his American Letters, that nothing more fully proves the fidelity of Las Casas's recitals, than those of Cortes, the other Spanish commanders, and of Clavigero himself ; since the indigenous population was reduced to such a small number of individuals, fifty years after the conquest, and that it is almost extinct in the Antilles.

Las Casas after having passed fifty years in the New World, and traversed the ocean twelve or thirteen times, to plead the cause of the Indians, in Spain, renounced his Bishoprie, and returned in 1551, to his native country, where he died, after having immortalized himself by his beneficence, and the practice of every virtue.

Such a noble character as that of Las Casas, is always worthy of being claimed by a country to which he belongs ; and this induces me to mention his French origin. Remesal, in his

pany, revived the languishing agriculture and commerce: the population of this province more than doubled in twenty years, and the riches of the country augmented in a progression still more considerable.

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History of the Diocese of Chiapa, says, that B. de las Casas was descended from a noble and distinguished family in France, whose ancestors had gone to settle in Spain, about the time of St. Ferdinand. The *Bibliotheca Mexicana*, a biographical work, published at Mexico, in 1755, also observes, in speaking of Father B. de las Casas: *Parentem clarissimâ stirpe virum e Gallis ductâ, &c.* This circumstance is found confirmed and detailed in an old chronicle in the possession of a branch of this family, which still exists under the name of Las Casas, lord of Belveze in Languedoc. The head of the Las Casas of Belveze, passed from Spain to France, in 1200, with Blanche, mother of St. Louis.†

† The immortal bishop's descendant, Count Emmanuel de Las Casas, already well known to the British public, is every way worthy of his glorious ancestor, whether viewed in the amiable privacy of domestic life, or in the more distinguished sphere of politics and literature. If any difference of opinion can exist, as to the policy adopted by the ministers of England towards NAPOLEON, or the ignominious treatment our once formidable enemy has experienced from those in whose power he placed himself when the hour of misfortune arrived, no one can be insensible to the heroic constancy which has uniformly actuated the Count's conduct towards his fallen master. The impartial of our own days, and future historians, will record to the unfading honour of this truly virtuous man, that living in a period of almost unprecedented political profligacy, when disinterestedness and consistency in statesmen, had nearly ceased to be considered as virtues, Count de Las Casas was amongst the solitary few who redeemed the degraded character of the times, by his unshaken attachment to the sovereign whom he had acknow-



'This province, its capital and other towns, are honourable monuments of the prodigious influence of an enlightened, prudent, and disinterested governor on the prosperity of a colony. During nearly eleven years (from 1793 to 1804) that Don Vincente de Emparan was governor of the colony, the liberal protection which he

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ledged from principle, and which, instead of diminishing, adversity only tended to increase!!

Driven from St. Helena by the system of persecution established there, the Count, though emaciated in health and broken in spirit, continues to advocate the cause of humanity, violated in the person of Napoleon and his meritorious followers in exile. In addition to his "LETTERS," and petition to the British parliament, published by Mr. Ridgway, appeals, no less unanswerable than eloquent, the Count has in a series of letters addressed to the sovereigns lately assembled at Aix la Chapelle, vainly endeavoured to convince those august personages that the man whose alliance they once courted with so much avidity, and to whose clemency some were indebted for the preservation of their thrones, has strong claims on their magnanimity, and is entitled to less harsh treatment.

Besides several memoirs presented to the Emperor, while employed on various important missions, all of which related to the improvement of some branch of the legislature, public works, or institutions of beneficence, Europe is indebted to Count de Las Casas for the *ATLAS HISTORIQUE*, &c. a work unequalled in the annals of literature, either as to the extent, variety, or importance of its multifarious contents. This stupendous production was the fruit of his emigration, and partly written in the United Kingdom. As it continues to be published under the name of A. LE SAGE, many are unacquainted with the real author; but the editor promises himself the pleasure of making the Historical Atlas more generally known and appreciated amongst his countrymen on a future day.

granted to agriculture and commerce, had augmented, in 1805, the colonial produce to double the quantity that it was in 1799; every class of society was in good circumstances, and many persons had acquired considerable fortunes. The town of Cumana, situated at half a league from the sea, and on the shores of the gulf of Cariaco, increased to triple its former size; houses elegantly built, and with Italian roofs, replaced hovels and huts; and a new quarter or suburb, that rivals the ancient town, took the venerated name of Emparan.

When Don Vincente de Emparan was governor of Cumana, he took upon himself to permit the ships of friendly and neutral powers to trade with certain restrictions in the ports of his government. This wise measure disseminated plenty and happiness in his province, whilst misery and desperation produced revolts in the neighbouring colonies. His sovereign, far from reprimanding him for having mitigated the severity of the prohibitory laws, in consequence of the urgency of the case, praised and granted him especial marks of favour.

Formerly (in the time of the Welsers,) the province or district of New Barcelona, formed a part of the country ceded to them; but there was no settlement made on it then. At that period the governor of Cumana was independent of Venezuela. In 1579, Juan Pimontel, governor of the last named province, sent Garcia Gonzales, at the head of one hundred Spaniards, and four hundred natives in the pay of Spain, to



repress the Cumanagotes or Quiriquires Indians, enemies of the Spaniards. Though Gonzales gained several advantages over various tribes of this country; and although, if we can give credit to Oviedo y Banos, the historian of Venezuela, he could temper the rigours of war and victory by moderation and humanity, which caused him to be surnamed the glorious, by his contemporaries; it is no less true, that the Indians were very far from being subjugated and pacified in 1585. It was in that year that the audiencia of St. Domingo, in which the supreme government of the colonies was concentrated at that period, ordered Christopher Cobos to go and wage war at his own expence against the Indians of Cumana and Venezuela, to expiate the crime of his father Alonzo Cobos, governor of Cumana, who had caused the assassination of Francisco Faxardo, celebrated in the annals of Venezuela.

Luis de Roseas, governor of Venezuela, gave Christopher Cobos only a corps, composed of a hundred and seventy Spaniards, and three hundred natives to execute this duty, although he had been commanded by the audiencia to place under his orders all the troops at his disposal. Animated by the necessity of effacing the stigma attached to his name, the young Cobos did not hesitate to take the field with this handful of troops: performing prodigies of valour, he subjected the Indians who dwelt near the river Tuy, Unare and Neveri, and built near the mouth of the Salt

River, the town of San Christoval (the name of his patron,) which no longer exists, its inhabitants having emigrated to Barcelona, founded by Juan Urpin in 1634.

In those times of conquest and anarchy, the Spanish generals, who fought at two thousand leagues distance from their sovereign, acknowledged no other law than that suggested by their strength and caprice. Christopher Cobos enraged at the scanty force Roxas had put under his command, and at his private intrigues to counteract his success, did homage for his conquest to Rodrigo Nunes Lobo, governor of Cumana, and the metropolitan government approved of the union of the country of the Cumanagotos (the district of Barcelona) with the government of Cumana. From thence it arises, that the governors of Cumana style themselves also governors of Barcelona.

According to M. Depons, the population of the town of Cumana was twenty-four thousand persons in 1802. When I was there in 1807, it amounted to twenty-eight thousand and upwards; and at the end of 1810, it had increased to thirty thousand inhabitants, almost all industrious and laborious. M. Depons also states that the population of the united provinces of Cumana, or New Andalusia, and of New Barcelona, was then only eighty thousand souls, including that of the capital. But the statements



I read on the spot, in 1807, declared this population to be ninety-six thousand persons.

The town of Cumana has two parish churches and two convents for men; one belonging to the Dominicans, and the other to the Franciscans. I had occasion to be acquainted with the friars of those two convents during my stay there in 1807, and I found them very worthy characters, liberal and enlightened men, strangers to all ideas of intolerance and persecution.

There is no edifice in Cumana which strikes you by its magnificence. This town has a theatre much smaller than that of Caraccas, and constructed on the same plan: it would be suffocating to be in a theatre built in the European fashion; besides, it rains still more rarely at Cumana than at Caraccas. The actors of Cumana are people of colour, who do not declaim in their parts, but merely recite them with a most tiresome monotony.

Bull-feasts, cock-fighting, and rope-dancing, are the amusements most frequented by the inhabitants of this town and the rest of the province. There was no town clock in Cumana four years ago: while M. de Humboldt was in this town, in 1800, he constructed a very fine sun-dial there. When a stranger passes by this dial, if he be in company with a Cumanese, the latter never fails to say, "we owe this sun-dial to the learned Baron de Humboldt." The word *sabio*, which they employ on this occasion, signifies,

in the mouth of a Creole of the Spanish colonies, both wise and learned. I remarked that they never pronounced the name of this illustrious traveller, without adding to it the epithet of *sabio*, and they speak of him with a mingled sentiment of admiration and regard. They are happy in relating the complaisance with which he shewed them his astronomical instruments, and explained their use. Those who had received letters or notes from him, preserved them carefully, and esteem it an honour to have had a correspondence with him. These sentiments of the Cumanese for that celebrated man, are equally honourable to their character, and that of the personage who is the object of them.

The pretty river Manzanares runs through the middle of the town; there is a very handsome wooden bridge across it: the water in this river has only sufficient depth for very small vessels. Large ships anchor at the Placer, a sand bank in the middle of the port, which is well sheltered.

Cumana is in  $10^{\circ} 37'$  N. latitude, and  $64^{\circ} 10'$  West longitude: its climate is very hot, the elevation of the town above the sea level, being only fifty-three feet. Farenheit's thermometer usually rises to 90, and sometimes even to 95 degrees, from the month of June until the end of October. In that season it seldom descends to  $80^{\circ}$  during the night; the sea breeze tempers the heat of the climate, which is otherwise very healthy. From the commencement of November, to the



end of March, the heats are not so great; the thermometer is then between  $82^{\circ}$  and  $84^{\circ}$ , in the day-time, and generally falls to  $77^{\circ}$  and even  $75^{\circ}$  during the night. There is scarcely ever any rain in the plain in which Cumana is situated, though it rains frequently in the adjacent mountains. The hygrometer of Deluc is commonly at fifty degrees there, during the winter, and marks the utmost dryness from the beginning of November to the beginning of June.

Cumana is built at the foot of a volcanic mountain, and subject to earthquakes. This town has no public establishment for the education of youth: it is therefore astonishing to find any knowledge among its inhabitants; yet, there is some information disseminated among many of the Creoles of Cumana. They are but seldom sent to Europe for their education; the most wealthy receive it at Caraccas, and the greater number under schoolmasters, from whom they learn the Spanish grammar, arithmetic, the first elements of geometry, drawing, a little Latin and music. I have remarked considerable talent, application and good conduct in their youth, and less vivacity and vanity than among those of Caraccas. Not being so rich as the latter, the Cumanese are brought up with principles of economy and industry: there are no idlers among them: in general they are inclined to business. Some apply themselves to the mechanical arts, others to commerce:

they have also a great partiality for navigation, and trading with the neighbouring colonies of other nations, and by their activity and prudence make considerable profits with small capitals. Their articles of exportation are cattle, smoked meat, (tassajo) and salted fish, which commodities they have in great abundance. Two pounds of beef are sold at Cumana for twopence-halfpenny; and twenty-two pounds of salt meat, at from three shillings and fourpence to four shillings and twopence. Fish is never weighed there; some days there is such a quantity caught by the fishermen, that they give ten, twelve or fifteen pounds weight for fivepence. The poor go to the sea-side with maize, cakes and eggs, and barter them for fish. Eggs are the small change in Cumana, Caraccas, and other provinces of Venezuela, where copper coin is unknown; the smallest piece in circulation being a medio-real in silver, worth twopence halfpenny. If one goes into a shop to buy something worth less than twopence halfpenny, they give as change, two or three eggs; for a dozen of eggs there is worth only twopence halfpenny. That is also the price of a measure of excellent milk, about a quart. A sheep is sold for a dollar; a fine turkey for twenty or twenty-five pence; a fowl for fivepence; a fat capon sevenpence halfpenny to tenpence; a duck, the same price; game and wild fowl are frequently sold cheaper than butcher's meat, and all those articles



are still cheaper in the small towns of the interior.

I lived at the best and dearest hotel in Cumana, at a dollar per day, including the expences of my son and servant. They gave us for breakfast cold meats, fish, chocolate, coffee, tea and Spanish wine. An excellent dinner, with Spanish and French wines, coffee and liqueurs. In the evening, chocolate. I was well lodged and lighted. I should have expended but half that sum if I had gone to board and lodge in a family. In short, there is not a country in the world, where one may live cheaper than in the province of Cumana. An excellent dinner may be had there for tenpence, not including wine, which does not cost more than fivepence per bottle, to those who buy a quantity of it. Poor people drink punch, which is at a very low rate, for it does not cost above one penny per quart.

The inhabitants of Cumana are very polite; it may even be said that they are excessively so. There is not so much luxury among them as at Caraccas; their houses, however, are tolerably well furnished. They are very abstemious. Those dinners and festivals which form one of the charms of society in Europe, and which, in the British and French colonies are repeated almost every day from the first of January to the last of December, are unknown to the inhabitants of Cumana, and the other provinces of Venezuela.

The retail trade of Cumana is almost entirely

in the hands of the Catalans, Biscayans, and Canarians: those men are chiefly sailors, who have begun to open shop with a few dollars, and who, in a few years, acquire fortunes by their frugality and industry. If a man of that country lands without a farthing, the first Castalan he meets takes him to his house, gives him work, or recommends him to some of his countrymen. There are many countries in which one brother would not do for another, that which a Catalan is always inclined to do for his countrymen. In this they resemble the Scotch; but they are not, like too many of the latter, whom we meet in the colonies, arrogant to their inferiors, and servile to their superiors.\* The Catalan preserves

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\* The occasional reflections in which our author indulges on national character, are certainly no proofs of liberality; and although not participated in by the Editor, he does not feel himself justified in suppressing them. It is only by collecting the opinions of foreigners, that nations are enabled to estimate their claims to admiration or censure, as individuals look up to the voice of public opinion, and their friends, for the regulation of their conduct. Whether truth or prejudice has had most share in those charges which Mr. Lavaysse only makes in common with many other writers, it is no more than just to contrast what Mr. Curran, the most eloquent speaker, and distinguished patriot of his age, thought of the Scotch in their own country, with the opinions of these who have only seen them in our colonies, or struggling for emolument and place amongst the no less greedy English and Irish competitors who infest the British metropolis. In a letter to one of his correspondents, from Loudon Castle, that great man represents the Scotch, as "the natural enemies of vice, and folly,



in all the situations in which he is placed by fortune, a certain air of haughtiness and dignity, that gains him the esteem of every generous mind.

It was the Catalans who taught the inhabitants of Cumana, and the adjacent provinces, to derive advantage from various local productions; for instance, from cocoa nuts, they make oil from the pulp they contain; with this pulp they also make an emulsion which is substituted for that of almonds, and with which they make very good orgeat, that is sold extremely cheap in their coffee houses. The Catalans were the first who established rope manufactories at Cumana, where they make excellent cables of the bark of the mahet (genus bombaz,) also twine and cords of the aloe, (agave foetida,) &c.

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and slavery; the great sowers, but still greater weeders, of the human soil. No where," he adds, "can you see the cringing hypocrisy of dissembled detestation, so inseparable from oppression: and as little do you meet the hard, and dull, and right lined angles of the southern visage." And in his masterly defence of Hamilton Rowan, Mr. C. calls it "a nation cast in the happy medium between the spiritless acquiescence of submissive poverty, and the sturdy credulity of pampered wealth; cool and ardent, adventurous and persevering, winging her eagle flight against the blaze of every science, with an eye that never winks, and a wing that never tires: crowned as she is with the spoils of every art, and decked with the wreath of every muse, from the deep and scrutinizing researches of her Hume, to the sweet and simple, but not less sublime and pathetic morality of her Burns!"—LIFE OF CURRAN by his son, Vol. I. pages 255 and 261.

The town of Cumana is defended only by a miserable fort, which commands the town and port. To the north-east is the Gulf of Cariaco, a small Mediterranean. Opposite to Cumana, is the Point of Arraya, on which there was once a fort, whose ruined walls alone were standing in 1808. This gulf is twelve leagues long from east to west, and from three to four leagues in breadth throughout its extent. It would be a magnificent port for a navy, where large ships might ride in safety from all weathers: batteries of heavy mortars, placed at each side of the entrance, could hinder the most formidable fleets from entering, because ships of the line, in order to enter either the port of Cumana, or this gulf, are obliged, after having made the Point of Arraya, to avoid a sand bank, which runs from that point into the sea for two leagues.

The Gulf of Cariaco offers in all parts of its coast good anchorage and natural wharfs convenient for shipping. On each side the land presents two amphitheatres ornamented with the most beautiful and varied vegetation and a cultivated landscape. At the bottom of the gulf, to the east, is the fine plain of Cariaco, watered by the navigable river of the same name. At a mile and a half from its mouth is the town, or rather the large village of Cariaco, which in the Spanish official papers, bears the name of San Felipe de Austria.



The population of the town was about seven thousand persons in 1807, four thousand inhabited the remainder of the district. Formerly they cultivated only the cotton and cocoa trees; but my venerable friend Martin de Arestimuno, of whom I shall have occasion to speak hereafter, formed a superb plantation of coffee there, and another of sugar with a distillery for rum. Many other persons have planted coffee and sugar canes; among the rest, Messieurs Rubio, two enlightened and worthy farmers. In 1807, the governor, Manuel de Cagigal, endeavoured to prevent the distillation of rum, under the false pretence that it would injure the trade in brandies with Spain; but the true reason was, that the rum trade, one of the English smuggling branches, brought large profits to his excellency.

Innumerable swarms of marine birds frequent the Gulf of Cariaco, chiefly on the banks of mud situated on the sides of the entrance to the river: nothing can be more agreeable than to see at sunrise, all those birds issuing by thousands from the mangrove trees, where they pass the night, and disperse over the surface of the water to seek their food: when their hunger is satisfied, some repose on the mud and sand banks; some swim on the water merely for diversion, while others cover the branches of all the neighbouring trees. I have seen a bank of sand above three hundred yards in length, and the little banks or islands near it entirely covered with these aquatic

birds. Those I recognised were flamingoes of all ages and colours, pelicans, herons, boobies, five or six kinds of ducks, of which one is larger than that of India, several kinds of water-hens, a bird as white and as large as a swan, but which has a long beak, red and pointed, longer and more delicate legs, and feet formed like those of a swan : it swims like that bird, but flies much better. I also saw in the same spot, many other birds which I am sure have never been described by any naturalist. Twice I paid the master of the vessel that took me from Cariaco to Cumana, and back again, to remain half an hour at those islets, in order that I might contemplate at my leisure those myriads of birds, of such various forms and colours. One of them, which I could not distinguish by sight, in the multitude, uttered plaintive and melancholy notes : at the time that it attracted my attention, I had just loaded a small gun, to gratify my son, who requested that he might be suffered to fire on a flock of birds that reposed within twenty paces of us ; the plaintive voice of this obtained mercy for all ; Samuel's hands were disarmed ; my sentiments passed rapidly into his feeling and tender mind, being at that time only seven years old. I was then a prey to persecution, and the distress occasioned by a most agonizing separation. The melancholy notes of a bird which appeared to resemble those of the turtle-dove in the place



where I drew my breath, awakened all the ideas, the kind or cruel illusions which the word country inspires in the mind of the unfortunate and persecuted who travel in distant and hostile regions!

The catching of ducks and other aquatic birds, by two Indians in this part of the gulf, was an object of great amusement to my son, and an abstraction to myself. Though this singular and silent chase may have been already noticed, I cannot avoid describing it. In this part of the New World, the inhabitants of the shores of lakes and gulfs, leave calabashes continually floating on the water, in order that the birds, by being accustomed to see them, may not be alarmed at the sight. When the people wish to catch any of these wild fowl, they go into the water with their heads covered each with a calabash, in which they make two holes for seeing through. They thus swim towards the birds, throwing a handful of maize on the water from time to time, of which the grains scatter on the surface. The ducks and other birds approach to feed on the maize, and at that moment the swimmer seizes them by the feet, pulls them under water and wrings their necks before they can make the least movement, or by their noise spread an alarm among the flock. The swimmer attaches those he has taken to his girdle, and he generally takes as many as are necessary for his family. Many

have no other profession in the neighbourhood of some towns, and daily take multitudes of these birds, which they sell at a low rate, though they are very good food.

At about a league and a half from the town of Cariaco, and near the road that leads to Carupano, is a lake, or rather a marsh, of about half a league long, by nearly the same breadth, which is the resort of innumerable reptiles, toads, serpents, and crocodiles: it is there also, according to the assertions of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, where the tyger cats go to quench their thirst. It was at ten o'clock at night when I first passed near this marsh: it exhaled an hydrogen-sulphurous odour extremely nauseous, and phosphoric fires appeared on its surface. A preacher of the Island of Margarita acknowledged to me that the hideous appearance of this lake, had furnished him with some of the imagery of a sermon which I heard him preach at the beginning of Lent in 1807, and of which I shall give a fragment in the description of that island. The inhabitants of the town of Cariaco have told me of a frightful animal, which so much resembles the fabulous winged dragon, that I dare not repeat the description they gave me of it, lest I should incur the ridicule of naturalists. A great many persons, however, assured me that they had seen it on the borders of the marsh. What can this amphibious animal be? Perhaps an enormous guana, lizard, or some



monstrous reptile of the order of Sauriens. I collected petrolium on the brink of this marsh.

The name of the town of Carupano is not found in the work of M. Depons on the government of Caraccas, nor on the map which accompanies that kind of statistic account, to which the name of Travels has been given. This town and its district merit, however, a place there; for it is the first met with on the coast, after leaving the Gulf of Paria, and when coming from Europe, North America, or the Brazils.

The port of Carupano is defended by a battery situated on an eminence. It is a very healthy place, built in the opening of two charming valleys, watered by two fine rivers. The inhabitants divide their time in the occupations of agriculture, some trading concerns, and dancing. It is completely a dancing town. I have seen very fine youths at the balls of Carupano, and many young women, who would be remarkable for their beauty even in our European cities; but they are beauties entirely strangers to the arts of our coquettes; beauties such as nature has made them, and who know no laws than what that unsophisticated deity has given them.

Carupano and the neighbouring district have a population of about eight thousand persons. There is a considerable trade there in horses and mules. At the foot of the neighbouring hills there are quarries of gypsum (sulphat of lime); so that most of

the houses in the town are cieled. In going by land from Carupano to Guiria, and the Punta de Piedra, the smiling valley of Rio Caribe is crossed, watered by numerous rivulets: it is the Tempe and Campagna of this country. There was then in the valley of Rio Caribe a remarkable personage: he called himself a Greek, and native of Smyrna: others pretended that he was a Turk; but of whatever nation he might be, he was certainly a very worthy man: his name was Constantin. When I was with him in 1807, he was eighty years of age, but with the vigour and appearance of a well formed man of fifty, and the vivacity of one of thirty. He had five children by his first marriage, and three by his second wife, who was young and amiable, and with whom he kept a very good house. I was most kindly received by him. Mr. Constantin is the wealthiest planter in this valley: I was recommended to him by a very respectable man, who lives retired in the solitudes of Cape de Paria, Mr. Closier d'Arcueil, a native of Paris. This gentleman is son of one of the first proprietors of Grenada, and cousin of the virtuous Closier Sainte Marie, legally murdered at Grenada in 1795.

The town and valley of Rio Caribe have a population of 4500 persons. M. Depons speaks of Guiria and of Guinima, two villages established by the French and Spaniards, who emigrated from Trinidad, to avoid the vexations of the British Governor. When a description is



given of the provinces and districts of a country, their chief towns ought not to be omitted. Punta de Piedra, which in 1797 was only a hamlet of fishermen, has become the principal place in the district of Paria, and the residence of a lieutenant governor. Though the town is not yet considerable, by the number and beauty of its edifices, it is nevertheless a most important spot, from the prodigious fertility of its territory, and its fortunate position near the mouths of the Guara-piche, Orinoco, and Port Spain.

The town is situated in a magnificent plain, and on a platform which commands the sea; from whence there is a view of Port Spain, all the western part of the Island of Trinidad, the gulf of Paria, and of all the vessels that enter or go out of it.

At the extremity of this plain, opens the beautiful and fertile valley of Yaguaraparo, covered with plantations of coffee and cocoa: the fertility of its soil, and the mildness of its climate, particularly appropriated to the latter plant, have made the fortunes of all the colonists established there. A Catalan sailor settled here, in 1790, when the valley was almost a desert: he began, alone, to fell the woods and plant cocoa trees: in 1797, this man had twenty negroes on his plantation: in 1804 he had thirty slaves, and with this small assistance he gathered more than one hundred thousand pounds weight of cocoa. He died in 1804, intestate, it is said, and the government

took possession of his property. It was managed in 1807 by the surgeon-major of the garrison of Cumana, who deemed himself the proprietor of it. This officer placed a considerable number of slaves on the estate, and told me that he was sure the plantation would render him five hundred thousand pounds of cocoa annually, after six or seven years!

We are now arrived on the borders of the Province of Cumana, near the mouths of the Guarapiche and Orinoco. There also, as on the banks of the Ohio, I found Frenchmen and Irishmen thrown on those solitary shores by political persecutions!

The inhabitants of the district of Punta de Piedra were unanimous in the praise of their Lieutenant Governor Don Juan Mayoral. If physiognomy can be depended on, I am sure those praises could not be more justly merited.

The jurisdiction of the Governor of Guiana used to extend over the establishments situated within cannon shot, on the left bank of the Orinoco, at the Paria side.

In 1808 the British Government established a post between the Guarapiche and Orinoco, near the sea, under pretence of cutting guiacum wood for their navy: they have since erected batteries which command the navigation of those two rivers, and it will hereafter become the Gibraltar of this part of the globe, if the Venezuelan government should permit them to continue.



The vallies, and above all the banks of the rivers of this part of the province of Cumana, abound in logwood and Brazil wood: they cut those woods at present, so necessary to their manufactures, and doubtless find it very convenient to have in their own possession, what they would otherwise be obliged to purchase from foreigners.

#### CUMANACOA, OR SAN BALTAZAR DE LOS-ARIAS.

Cumanacoa is the chief town of one of the most fertile districts of this province, and is situated in a valley of the same name, at eighteen leagues inland to the south-east of Cumana: the air is healthy, and tolerably cool. The fruits cultivated there, are reputed the best in the province; but cocoa is its principal wealth. The population of the town and adjacent country is about five thousand souls. Until thirty years ago, the neighbouring country was inhabited by unconquered Indians, who made frequent incursions against the Spaniards of this quarter; but the missionaries have pacified and united them in missions.

There are springs in the neighbourhood of Cumanacoa which contain salts similar to those of Epsom in dissolution, and other mineral waters. It is very well calculated to become a watering place, like our Plombieres, Bagueres, &c.

M. de Humboldt, who remained at Cumanacoa,

to make astronomical observations there, determined its latitude at  $10^{\circ} 16'$  N. and its longitude at  $64^{\circ} 15'$  west.

At twenty leagues further inland, on entering the range of the Bergantin mountains, near that of Turimiquiri, is the famous grotto of Guacharo, in which are millions of a new species of *Caprimulgus*\*, that fill the cavern with their plaintive and dismal cries. In every country the same causes have produced similar effects on the imagination of our species. The grotto of Guacharo is, in the opinion of the Indians, a place of trial and expiation: souls when separated from bodies, go to this cavern; those of men who die without reproach do not remain in it, and immediately ascend, to reside with the great Manitou in the dwellings of the blessed: those of the wicked are retained there eternally; and such men as have committed but slight faults of a venial nature, are kept there for a longer or shorter period, according to the crime.

Immediately after the death of their parents and friends, the Indians go to the entrance of this cavern, to listen to their groans. If they think they hear their voices, they also lament, and address a prayer to the great spirit Manitou, and another to the devil Muboya; after which they drown their grief with intoxicating beverages.

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\* Their fat is an article of commerce.



But if they do not hear the wished for voices, they express their joy by dances and festivals. In all this there is but one circumstance that creates surprize, it is that the Indian priests have not availed themselves of such credulity to augment their revenues. Many Indians, though otherwise converted to christianity, have not ceased to believe in Guacharo: and to descend into Guacharo, is among them synonymous with dying.

Thus in the majestic forests of South America, as in the ancient civilization of Hindostan; under the harsh climates of the north of Europe and Canada, as in the burning regions of Africa, in all parts the man of every colour is distinguished from other animals by this irresistible foreboding of a future life, in which an Omnipotent Being recompenses the good, and punishes evil doers. Whatever may be the modifications, differences, or absurdities with which imagination, ignorance, and greedy imposture have enveloped this belief, it appears to be one of the strongest moral proofs of the identity of our species, and to be a natural consequence of reflection.

If the gloom of this cavern, and the mournful cries of the Caprimulgus, which it constantly re-echoes, are adapted for influencing and intimidating feeble minds; the clear river that runs from its entrance, at the feet of majestic mountains crowned by the most beautiful vegetation, a smiling valley, together with the eternal spring of the climate,

would have made an Elysium of this place, if it had produced a poet.

I now proceed to describe the province or district of New Barcelona. This country is bounded on the east by the province of Caraccas, on the west by that of Cumana, properly speaking, and on the south by the Orinoco, which separates it from Guina. To the north is the chain of Bergantin, which proceeds from the mountains of Santa Martha, and loses itself in the sea at Cape de Paria. It is thinly inhabited and scantily cultivated, but less mountainous than those of Caraccas and Cumana. Its immense meadows feed numerous herds of oxen, horses, asses and mules, and thousands of them are exported annually to the neighbouring colonies. There is also a great quantity of oxen slaughtered there, of which the meat is smoked, and is an object of considerable trade. The port of Barcelona exported, during the peace of Amiens, and in one year, 132,000 oxen, 2,100 horses, 84,000 mules, 800 asses, 180,000 quintals of tassajo or smoked beef, 36,000 ox hides, 4,500 horse hides, and 6,000 deer skins. In the environs of Barcelona there are cultivated various alimentary plants, including cocoa, of which there is a great consumption. There are not more exported from this province annually than 200,000 quintals of cocoa, 3 to 4000 quintals of indigo, about 2000 quintals of arnotto, and from 250 to 300,000 quintals of cotton. The merchandize is packed with much care in ox hides and deers skins of a



square form, and those coverings are an advantage in trade. Maize is also an article of growth and exportation; but there is seldom more of it exported annually than 150, to 200,000 sacks, of about 150 pounds each. The inhabitants of the country grow a little rice for their own use, but it has not yet become an article of commerce.

Although the fisheries furnish abundantly for the consumption of the inhabitants on the coasts of this district, and they derive an article of small traffic with the interior from them, they are very far from being as productive as those of Cumana, and the coasts of the Islands of Margarita, Cubagua, and Coche. This district, though its extent is so great, has only two towns, Barcelona and Concepcion del Pao. In 1634, Don Juan Urpín laid the foundations of Barcelona, on the left bank of the river Neveri, and at a league from its mouth: the chief place of the establishment in this canton was then the town of Cumanagoto, situated at two leagues higher up the river, which is now only a miserable village. Alcedo confounds Cumanagoto with Cumanacoa, or San Baltaz de los Arias. As every Spanish town must have a saint for its patron, that of Cumanagoto was named San Christoval de Cumanagoto.

Previous to the foundation of Barcelona there existed a town called Maracapano, situated nearer the sea. Though its name is still found in the Dictionary of Alcedo, and on maps which are equally incorrect, even the ruins of it are not to

be found, and the present inhabitants of Barcelona are not quite agreed about the spot on which it was situated.

Though there is considerable trade at Barcelona, and it contains some opulent commercial houses, the town is badly built; the houses are of mud, and in general very meanly furnished. The streets are filthy and miry when there is rain, and in fine weather the dust is enough to blind one, however trifling a wind may blow. Alcedo with his usual negligence says, that the climate of Barcelona is more unhealthy than that of Cumana. It is exactly the reverse: the climate of Cumana is very healthy, though hot, because it is extremely dry, and that of the town of Barcelona unhealthy, from the opposite causes. This town had in 1807, a population of 15,000 persons.

Barcelona is in  $10^{\circ} 6'$  N. latitude,  $67^{\circ} 4'$  W. longitude, and twelve leagues from Cumana in a direct line; but the windings which it is necessary to make to avoid bad roads, make it a journey of twenty hours. It is reckoned ten marine leagues by sea from the port of Barcelona to that of Cumana, and not two leagues, as M. Depons has said: from the former to the latter port there are a great number of islets, frequented by fishermen, but they afford no shelter for large vessels.

The town of Conception del Pao is built in a plain situated at the other side of the range of Bergantin: the air there is wholesome, although it is very hot and much exposed to heavy rains.



It owes this advantage to the comparative elevation of its scite, which does not permit the water to remain stagnant, that runs into the Orinoco, and Guarapiche. It is an uncultivated country, but abounding in natural pastures which feed numerous herds that are exported by those two rivers, to the islands of Trinidad and Tobago. About the middle of the last century, Pao was only a village inhabited by people of colour; the produce of their cattle having enriched them, the inhabitants of the adjacent countries hastened to settle themselves there. Ten years ago, they received all possible encouragement from Governor Emparan, and they now reckon three thousand persons inhabiting the little town of Pao. About one thousand more inhabit the savannas in the neighbourhood, where they are occupied with their cattle, and the cultivation of as much cocoa, maize, and bananas as are necessary for their subsistence. The rest of the population of the district of Barcelona is distributed in six or seven villages, and in the Hales, places where the herdsmen alone inhabit. The population of Pao, the villages and savannas, is about twenty-eight thousand persons, while the total population of the province of Cumana or New Andalusia, comprehending the district of Barcelona, is ninety-six thousand souls.

Historians and geographers have asserted that New Andalusia is a province depending on the government of Cumana, a country which they

did not know where to place. A map that I have before me, places this country between the Orinoco and the Caroni. Many others are equally erroneous on this country. The fact is, that, in political geography, New Andalusia is synonymous with Cumana. It is therefore necessary to say, the province of Cumana or New Andalusia. There are few countries more varied, fertile, or better watered than the different districts of this province. Its mountains on the coast form a magnificent barrier opposed to the sea, and appear to be a rampart placed by nature to secure her favourite country from those hurricanes or sudden tempests so destructive to the Antilles. Those mountains and hills are crowned with] gigantic and valuable trees, fine shrubs, aromatic plants, flowers that have the brightest and most varied tints, and perfume the atmosphere in every season.

This country is, in general, very healthy, a few marshy places excepted: its climate is particularly favourable to old persons and women. Here age does not present that horrible train of disease, with which it is accompanied in northern countries: gout, rheumatism, blindness, deafness and corporeal deformity are almost unknown. In that happy climate persons of both sexes enjoy almost to the last moment of life, all their physical and intellectual faculties: there, man is gently extinguished, and does not, as in cold countries,



perish a martyr to hereditary disease, or intolerable seasons.

### GUIANA, OR GUAYANA.

This extensive region which is included between the mouths of the Orinoco and the second degree of North latitude, contains several European settlements, those of the Spanish portion are by no means the least fertile or important.

Spanish Guiana has for its boundaries the Portuguese possessions at San Jose de Marasitanos to the south, New Granada and the Varinas to the west; those of Cumana, Barcelona, and Caraccas on the north; and French and Dutch Guiana to the east. The maritime bounds of this country extend one hundred and twenty leagues, from the river Amazons to the northern mouth of the Orinoco.

Previous to the treaty of peace concluded in September 1801, the Portuguese possessions extended from the mouth of the Amazons to the North Cape, east of the Island of Carpori: the same treaty fixed the river Carapana, as the limit of French and Portuguese Guiana: this river runs into the Amazons in 20' of North latitude, above Fort Macapa. This limit or line of demarcation follows the course of that river, in running to its source, from whence it continues by the chain of mountains which divide the course of the

rivers as far as the head of the Rio Blanco, supposed to be between the second and third degrees of north latitude.

France has no other possession in this country than Cayenne, a colony which has always been languishing from mismanagement, and not by any means owing to the unhealthiness of the climate. It is very far from being as unwholesome as some have described it, for the climate is preferable to that of the Antilles, and the soil much more fertile. The words Cayenne and Guina are evidently derived from the Indian word Guainia, the Marsitan name of the Rio Negro and surrounding country. Europeans have therefore given the name of Guiana, or Guayna, to all the country situated between the rivers Amazon and Orinoco.

The language of the Marsitan Indians is as generally disseminated towards the Equator, as the Caribbean tongue is from the banks of the Essequibo to those of the Madelaine.

According to the Spanish historians, Juan Cornepo was the first European who sailed up the Orinoco, and reconnoitred this country in 1531. Sir Walter Raleigh and Robert Dudley visited it afterwards. The chimera of El Dorado also attracted a great number of Spanish adventurers to it. Missionaries were sent there in 1576, who accused the Dutch as being the cause of their success among the natives.

In 1586, Don Antonio Berreo founded a town, to which he gave the name of San Tomé,



on the right bank of the Orinoco; but the continual wars he had with the Indians, did not permit him to establish himself there. This town has subsequently been pillaged by the English, Dutch, and French. In 1764, it was transferred further from the sea, and at ninety leagues from the mouths of the Orinoco, being the town now known by the name of San Tomé de Angostura.

During the Spanish domination, San Tomé was the residence of a governor depending on the captain general of Caraccas in political and military affairs, and on the intendant of Caraccas for those of finance. It was also the residence of a bishop and chapter. The chapter and its bishop are the poorest ecclesiastics in America.

There is but one city and five towns in Spanish Guiana; San Tomé, Barceloneta, Santa Rosa de Maruente, and Caicara, which is about a hundred leagues westward of San Tome, and San Antonio, forty leagues distant from it. There are, however, missionaries dispersed over this province.

The town of San Tomé had, in 1807, a population of about eight thousand five hundred persons, among whom were three hundred black slaves. This town is pretty well built and paved. Though it is situated in  $8^{\circ} 8'$  of latitude, and in  $52^{\circ}$  of longitude, and elevated only thirty toises above the level of the sea, it still enjoys a very mild temperature. It seldom happens that Reaumur's thermometer rises above twenty-four degrees, in

the hottest time of the year; and from the beginning of November to the end of April, it rarely rises above  $20^{\circ}$  during the day, and generally descends to  $17^{\circ}$  at night. The regular breezes, a great number of rivers and streams which water it, and the immense forests that surround it in almost every direction, are the causes which tend to diminish the excessive heat that seems natural to its latitude and trifling elevation above the sea. The remarks which I shall hereafter offer on the climate of Demarara, will apply equally to that of Spanish Guiana; but it appears to me, that the temperature and climate of Spanish Guiana are more agreeable, no doubt because the waters of the Aripo, the Caoni, and the Orinoco have more declivity than those of the Demarara and Essequibo.

It is very strange that Spanish Guiana, which is by far the most fertile country of Venezuela, should be, notwithstanding, the worst cultivated, the poorest and least peopled. I do not believe there exists a country more wholesome, better watered, more fertile and agreeable to inhabit than that which is situated on one side between the Essequibo and the Caroni, and on the other, between the Caroni and Orinoco: this tract is more than forty-five leagues from north to south, and seventy leagues from east to west; yet in its whole extent, it does not form a sixth part of Spanish Guiana!

If the Jesuits had not founded formerly the missions which are now superintended by the



Capuchins, it would still have been covered with forests inhabited by savages and beasts of prey. The manners of the indigenous inhabitants of Guiana will be treated of in another place. I believe their number is about thirty thousand souls; of whom fifteen thousand are united in missions. The others, such as the Arrooks and Guaraouns, are independent, and have not embraced christianity. It is estimated that there are eight thousand whites dispersed in the villages and huts in the remainder of the province, about six thousand Mestizos or free people of colour, and about three thousand slaves. I have already stated the population of the capital, San Tomé, to be eight thousand five hundred persons; making a grand total of fifty-two thousand.

The unfavourable commercial position of the port of San Tomé de Angustura, is one of the principal causes of the languishing state of agriculture and trade in this colony. It is necessary that there should be a commercial town nearer to the sea; for the swiftest sailing vessels require fifteen days to sail from the mouths of the river to Angustura. This port becomes worse every day from the sand banks: there are rocks in that part of the port most convenient for landing merchandize, but these might be easily blown up. The town of Barceloneta, peopled with industrious Catalans, is well placed for becoming a situation of considerable trade.

To give an idea of the poverty of Guiana, M.

Depons says, that the tythes of it were farmed out, in 1803, at only four thousand dollars per annum. The same writer adds, that the cattle of the Capuchin missionaries, of which he calculated the horned beasts only at 150,000, in 1803, paid no tythe, which is true ; but that does not explain why the tythe yields so little in this province. The fact is, that it paid very badly there ; because the inhabitants can easily evade it, placed as they are near large navigable rivers, where they sell in contraband almost all their produce and cattle.

M. Depons admits, however, that there were exported from 1791 to 1794, in objects produced from this province and that of Varinas, 10,381 oxen, and 3,140 mules, and that there were imported 200 negro slaves and 349,448 dollars.

No one knew better than M. Depons, that not a fifth part of the produce of Venezuela was sent to Spain ; that three fifths of this produce at least were purchased by the English smugglers, principally by those of the Island of Trinidad, and the remainder by the Swedish smugglers of St. Bartholomew, and the Danes of St. Thomas's, who, since the peace of 1783, have paid the Spaniards for what they bought of them, in British manufactures. M. Depons may have had his reasons for not divulging all those things ; for not saying that, though in no country the fiscal laws have been more rigorous than in the Spanish colonies, there was yet no part of the world where there was so much contraband trade, and where the



rights of the national commerce were more violated, owing to the absurdity of those laws, which will be examined in a future chapter.

When by the effects of a liberal government and wise laws, Guiana arrives at that pitch of prosperity, in which the inhabitants can avail themselves of the fertility of its soil, and its peculiar natural riches, the numerous navigable rivers which intersect it in every direction, geographical position, &c. it will become the centre and magazine of an immense trade, of the importance of which, no one who has not visited the country can form an idea.

It is to the banks of the Orinoco the inhabitants of Santa Fé de Bogota will go, to exchange the productions of their soil, for those of European industry, and for the commodities of North America ; while the first named country will also become the centre of a great trade between Peru and other parts of the world.

Until now, Spanish Guiana has been a country almost wild. The only object of cultivation being a little sugar, cotton, indigo, arnotto, and excellent tobacco, very agreeable for smoking, because it has not the pungency of that plant in northern climates. Of aromatic and medicinal plants, the *lignum quassia*, and the bark of Angostura, to which the name of Bonplandia trifoliata has been given, will some day or other become great objects of trade.

The oxen, horses and asses, which were origi-

nally transported from Europe, have increased greatly there, and form immense herds: a great part of them are wild in the savannas and forests, and others are kept in the natural pastures inclosed by the Spaniards, who are occupied in the care of those animals. There are some persons, each of whom possesses a tract of country of five or six leagues square, and is a proprietor of thirty or forty thousand oxen, horses, mules or asses; but, as it is impossible for them to keep and take proper care of such a great number of beasts from the want of herdsmen, they merely brand the flanks of their animals, occasionally beating up the forests to examine the cattle which belong to each, and to sell the best.

But there are thousands of these animals which are wild in the forests, and do not belong to any one. I was enabled to ascertain a fact known to all who have travelled in this country. The horses live there in societies, generally to the number of five or six hundred, and even one thousand: they occupy immense savannas, where it is dangerous to disturb, or try to catch them. In the dry season they are sometimes obliged to go two or three leagues, and even more, to find water. They set out in regular ranks of four abreast, and thus form a procession of an extent of a quarter of a league. There are always five or six scouts who precede the troop by about fifty paces. If they perceive a man or jaguar (the American tyger), they neigh, and the troop stops: if avoided, they



continue their march ; but if an attempt be made to pass by their squadron, they leap on the imprudent traveller, and crush him under their feet. The best way is always to avoid them, and let them continue their route : they have also a chief who marches between the scouts and the squadron, and five or six other horses march on each side of the band ; a kind of adjutants, whose duty consists of hindering any individual from quitting the ranks. If any one attempts to straggle either from hunger or fatigue, he is bitten till he resumes his place, and the culprit obeys with his head hanging down. Three or four chiefs march at the rear guard, at five or six paces from the troop. I had often heard, at Trinidad, of this discipline among the wild horses, and confess that I could scarcely believe it ; but what I have just stated is a fact, which I witnessed twice on the banks of the Guarapiche, where I encamped five days for the express purpose of seeing those organized troops pass. I have met on the shores of the Orinoco, herds of fifty to a hundred wild oxen : a chief always marched at the head and another at the rear of these.

The people of the country have assured me, that the wild asses, when they travel, observe the same discipline as the horses ; but the mules, though they also live in troops, are continually fighting with each other, and it has not been observed that they have any chief. They, however, unite at the appearance of a common enemy, and

display still more trick and address than the horses in avoiding the snares which are laid for catching them, and also for escaping when taken.

I remember to have seen one of these wild mules escape from a park, where he had been kept at Carupano, by throwing himself on his belly, and feigning to be dead: suddenly he passed his head under one of the bars of the gate, pushed it open, and rushed into the town: above thirty persons ran after him in every direction, and after a pursuit of two hours, they were obliged to give up the chase. It would be too tedious to recount all the tricks and stratagems employed by this animal to escape us: we finished the hunt by laughing at each other, for leaving him at liberty.

### PROVINCE OF VARINAS.

The town and territory of Varinas were detached in 1787, from the government of Maracaybo; when there was a portion of the province of Caraccas joined to it, and it was made a separate government. This province, which previous to this period, had been greatly neglected by the mother country, has since increased considerably, in point of agriculture and population. The town of Varinas had, in 1787, a population of twelve thousand inhabitants. According to M. de Humboldt, it is situated in  $7^{\circ} 33'$  of latitude, and  $70^{\circ} 22'$  West longitude from the meridian of Greenwich.



This province has only three other towns, which are San Jayme, containing seven thousand souls ; San Fernando d'Apure, six thousand souls. M. de Humboldt places San Fernando in  $7^{\circ} 53'$  North latitude, and  $70^{\circ} 20'$  W. longitude. Pedraza is situated at the foot of the mountains which separate the plains of Varinas from the province of Maracaybo : this little town had, in 1807, a population of three thousand souls. The total population of this province, comprising those of the towns I have just mentioned, amounted in 1807, to 141,000 souls.

This country is still in its infancy, though its territory is not inferior in fertility to any other part of South America. It is only since the last twenty years that sugar, coffee, indigo and cotton have been cultivated there. Formerly the inhabitants grew only cocoa and the provisions of the country necessary for their consumption. Their articles for exportation were cattle and tobacco, famous in every market of the world.

It is asserted at Caraccas and Trinidad, that the tobacco grown in the neighbourhood of the town of Varinas, is subject to be damaged by a worm, that introduces itself into the roll, and reduces it to powder in a short time. I have, however, bought some of this tobacco, which was in good condition after it had been kept two years, and worthy of its ancient reputation. The failing attributed to it for some years past, in the

Trinidad and Venezuela markets, no doubt proceeds from some accidental cause, or the negligence of those who prepared it.

The province of Varinas is watered by numerous streams, and several navigable rivers which flow into the great Portuguese river, and the Apure, the principal tributary of the Orinoco.

The inhabitants of this country lead a pastoral life: they live in the pastures, surrounded with numerous herds. Though in the midst of abundance, great natural wealth, and all the necessaries of life, they have not the means of purchasing any thing belonging to the luxury of dress, furniture, and European liquors; because they have no direct communication with the neighbouring colonies, and being placed in the interior of the country, they are obliged to sell their produce and cattle, at a miserable price, to the smugglers of San Tomé de Angustura and of Caraccas. But when the present contest terminates, and freedom of trade follows, it will become one of the richest and best peopled of this part of the world; for in general its climate is no less healthy than its soil is fertile. There are few indigenous natives in this province: they are almost all assembled in a mission of the Andalusian Capuchins, situated at five or six leagues from San Fernando de Apure. I believe there may be about six hundred of them. Other civilized Indians live with the whites and mestizos in the pastures. There are scarcely six thousand slaves in the population of the province of Vari-



nas, and these are only slaves in name ; for they live in the greatest familiarity with their masters, and are equally well fed, lodged, and clothed.

### MARACAYBO.

The town of Maracaybo, or New Zamora, was, until the beginning of the seventeenth century, the capital of Venezuela. When the town of Caraccas had become the capital of the general government, the town of Maracaybo was no longer any more than the residence of the governor of this district, which took the name of province.

New Zamora was founded in 1571, by Alonzo Pacheco, four years after the foundation of Caraccas. Coro, as already seen, was the residence of the governors in the time of the Welsers ; but this town remained in the distinct government of Caraccas, when the country was divided into provinces.

Maracaybo is well built of stone : its climate is healthy though hot. It was calculated in 1807, that it contained twenty-five thousand inhabitants, of whom five thousand were slaves. The natives of the town of Maracaybo have, in the Spanish colonies, the reputation of being very witty.

The Jesuits had a college there, which produced some distinguished scholars, and it became the literary town of America ; but with that order of clergy, the establishments for public instruction in this province also fell. The Creoles

of Maracaybo, however, preserve a decided taste for literature. But what is the use of literature if not directed towards its proper object, that of promoting civilization and public liberty? The youth of Maracaybo, who have received from nature great talents and imagination, place their principal glory in distinguishing themselves by cavilling and subtlety of argument. Thus the people of Maracaybo are reputed among their neighbours as deceitful and litigious; but the women have the character of being generally virtuous and much attached to their duties.

Next to Maracaybo, the most important town of this province is Merida, founded in 1558 by Juan Rodrigues Suare: this town is the seat of a bishop and chapter; it has also a seminary for young ecclesiastics, and a college which pretends to rival the university of Caraccas. It was, for some years, that of the provincial government, towards the middle of the last century. This town is situated between three rivers, which form an island of its district, and discharge themselves into the lake of Maracaybo. The position of this town near the mountains, renders its temperature very variable: however, the inhabitants assert that by wearing woollen clothes, as good health may be enjoyed there as any where else.

Truxillo was founded in 1520, by Diego de Parades, and once considered the handsomest town in this part of America; but it was pillaged and burnt by the pirate Grammont in 1678, who had landed



eighty leagues from it. All the inhabitants who could not escape, were cut to pieces. The ruins of its buildings are the monuments of its past grandeur. There were twelve thousand inhabitants in it in 1807. This town is situated among the mountains, and therefore enjoys a very mild temperature. In the vallies of its district are cultivated all the tropical productions; and on the hills and elevated situations, wheat, vines, and other articles produced in the temperate regions of Europe. Gibraltar is another little town placed near the lake, and on the shore opposite to the town of Maracaybo: it contains three thousand inhabitants. The population of the province of Maracaybo was in 1807, 174,000 persons.

*Population of the Provinces of Venezuela, in 1807.*

Caraccas	-	-	496,772 inhabitants
Cumana	-	-	96,000
Island of Margarita			16,200
Spanish Guiana	-		52,000
Varinas	-	-	141,000
Maracaybo	-	-	174,000

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Total 975,972 inhabitants.

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The whites among this population are about 200,000, in which number there are scarcely twenty thousand Europeans: the free people of

colour, the mixtures of European, indigenous and African blood, were to the number of 435,000; the negro or mulatto slaves 58,000; the Indians were about 282,000: of whom 210,000 were united in missions of practiced trades in the towns and villages. According to a census made in January, 1811, the population exceeded one million of souls.

### ISLAND OF MARGARITA.

On the 5th of January, 1807, I departed from Carupano, on the coast of the province of Cumana, to visit the Island of Margarita. The passage is about thirteen leagues.\* Having sailed at six o'clock in the morning in an open boat, we arrived at Pueblo de la Mar about noon.

On landing I went to the commandant to shew him my passport, and met the most obliging reception from him, as well as from his wife, a young and very pretty Spanish Creole. He told me that he had two Frenchmen established in the town, and that perhaps I might be desirous of seeing them, upon which he sent to conduct me to their houses. They were two Provençal traders, formerly residents in Martinico. They received me with that pleasure which is experienced by those who meet their countrymen at

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\* It is but eight leagues from the island to the continent.



two thousand leagues from home; an enjoyment, of which a man who has never quitted his native soil to travel in distant countries, cannot form an idea. One of those Provençals had married a woman of the country, carried on a little business, and seemed to be in very easy circumstances. The other was a complete original: by his dress he might be taken for a sailor; he had no other clothes than a pair of trowsers, blue shirt and a handkerchief on his head. Those two persons lived in the same house, and they invited me to pass the day with them. I was not a little surprised to find a great deal of information under the rough exterior of my second host. I inquired how he spent his time, and how, with so much instruction, and a mind so cultivated, he did not die of ennui in that wild place, deprived of the society of men of education. He answered, that he was partly occupied in teaching a little Latin to some young Creoles who were destined for the church, and the rest of his time he employed in learning English and German. He added that in the five years during which he had led this life, he had only two occasions of conversing with Germans, and very seldom with Englishmen: however, by dint of learning words, and of speaking from vocabularies, he had succeeded in learning to speak those two languages with tolerable facility. "Having lost the little fortune I made at Martinico, when I have acquired two thousand francs, I shall return to Europe, from

whence I can go and settle in the United States of America : with my knowledge of the German, English, Spanish and Italian languages, and that of book-keeping, I shall find the means of placing myself advantageously in some large commercial town." Such was the project of M. Isnard, the name of this persevering polyglott.

My two countrymen invited me after dinner to take a walk on the beach : while there, I saw a number of persons assembled in the gallery of a house situated on the sea shore : we went into it, and I was presented to the master, an old man of eighty years of age, and very active. He was occupied with some young girls, in dressing a figure of the Virgin, which was to make its appearance in the evening (it was twelfth day,) at the benediction. " Well, my friend," said the old Spanish creole to me, " I'll lay a wager you have never seen a Holy Virgin more magnificently and elegantly adorned than mine ? You see on her dress all the lace and the finest ribands of these young ladies. Admire that beautiful crown of pearls ! There are as many in it as there are days in the year." I reckoned them, and there were really three hundred and sixty-five beautiful pearls. I applauded his zeal highly. " At last," said he, " I am happy to find a Frenchman who is a good catholic : we have had some of your countrymen here already, sailors, and certainly heretics. I heard them say, for I understand a little French, that it was a great pity to put so many fine pearls



on a statue : *oh los demonios ! los hereticos !* Oh the devils, the heretics ! Can any thing be more agreeable to God, than ornamenting the immaculate Virgin, his mother !”

A moment afterwards, the Holy Virgin was placed on a bier, from whence hung several rose coloured ribbands, and each of the living virgins who were with the old Spaniard, held one of those ribands : the figure was thus carried by four churchwardens, and received at the church door by the priest, the proprietor of the statue held the censer.

When the ceremony was over, I returned to his house, chatting with the Creole virgins of the procession. The freedom of their conversation and manners surprized me. I inquired of my countrymen who those young girls were ; and they informed me that four of them were the sultanas of the old beau, who was extremely jealous : he kept them locked up at night, and had them watched during the day by two of his negroes ; this did not, however, prevent them from having lovers and intrigues among the travellers who visited the port ; a system which allowed the two inspecting negroes to live in the midst of luxury. The other vestals of the train followed the same profession. Those people firmly believe that their devotion to the Virgin Mary, and the absolution of their priest, expiate all their sins, even to robbery and murder : full of these ideas, they live strangers to all mora-

lity, and give themselves up without constraint or remorse to all the brutality of their appetites.

In walking along the beach, I met those French sailors, the heretical despisers of the Virgin's statue. By my appearance, they also took me for a seaman, and soon became as free with me, as if we had known each other for many years: they informed me of a truly piratical scheme which they had just formed: it was simply that of carrying off the Virgin's crown of pearls during the night, and depositing it on board the privateer, then lying at anchor in the roadstead. All I could say to dissuade them from this scheme had no effect: I then assumed an air of authority, and made them believe I was a French officer going to Caraccas on government business, and that if they committed such a base action, I would accuse them to Admiral Villaret, governor of Martinique, and to General Ernouf, governor of Guadaloupe. My menace had the desired effect, and the crown of the Madona del Pueblo de la Mar was suffered to decorate the Virgin!

After having dined with my countrymen, the Provençals, I departed for Pompatar, the principal port of the island; my son, servant, and self were each mounted on a mule, which is the only mode of conveyance in this island. A fourth mule carried my baggage, among which were two large flasks full of old Catalan wine; but being badly tied on, one of them fell to the ground and



broke in the middle of the town, or rather the village of Pueblo de la Mar. I immediately saw five or six Creole women run with *couis*\* to gather up the spilt wine, even what was on the ground, and drinking it with an avidity that induced me to suppose they had never tasted wine before. The inhabitants of this place are very poor, as are the greater part of those on the island: they are as fond of their country as the Barbadians, but not so vicious. As in Barbadoes, I did not hear of those abominable mothers who offer their daughters to strangers for a pecuniary consideration.

The melancholy ideas which had constantly haunted me, since my departure from Trinidad, acquired a still more dismal tint on viewing the desolate scene here, which seemed to lie under a malediction. I saw nothing around me but cactus arborescens, some mimosas covered with thorns, and plants whose leaves were full of prickles and points, all of which grew on sandy soils. Here and there I met with a few goats, some lean and sorry mules and asses, which having lost their hoofs, had lamed themselves in trying to graze on the leaves and flowers of those vegetables; but the humming birds, and the harmonious notes of other tropical birds, diverted my attention occasionally from this gloomy spectacle. At length, after a journey of an hour and a half, we arrived at

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\* Cups made of calabashes cut in two.

Pompatar, and put up at the house of a Corsican sailor, to whom I was recommended. I remained in this island until the first week of Lent.\* One day about four o'clock in the afternoon, being wholly unoccupied, I went into a house where there were billiards and games of hazard: I saw an old Spanish priest brought to the door in a sedan chair, who had a gold cross embroidered on his cossack on the left side: he was supported into the gaming room by his two negro bearers. This old man could scarcely crawl along, in consequence of a fit of the gout. He took a place among the gamesters, who were there, as in all other countries, the most worthless of the community. Other players were the officers of three French privateers, and some English smugglers, whose vessels were at anchor in the roads of Pom-

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\* The Editor is persuaded that the following passages will not fail to arrest the attention of every thinking mind; for surely it is impossible to contemplate without emotion, the striking picture here introduced, of the abandoned profligacy and disgusting hypocrisy, which all who have visited those unhappy countries acknowledge to be the characteristics of the Spanish and Hispano-American priesthood. Would to Heaven! that this powerful exposition of practices, at once so insulting to the common sense of mankind, and so derogatory from the beautiful simplicity of TRUE RELIGION, may assist the glorious efforts of a free and enlightened press, in tearing off the flimsy veil with which bigotry and self-interest have contrived to shroud TRUTH and REASON from the deluded many in other quarters of the globe. But, alas! the regions that are yet bound by the chains of papal superstition, are not the only theatres whereon the religious *Tartuffe* is still permitted to play a too prominent part.



patar. I inquired who this old priest was, and heard that he was the principal officer of the Inquisition, and the most inveterate gamester of the island, who passed all the time in which he was not engaged by the functions of his holy office in this receptacle. In spite of the horror in which I have always held such places, I remained there until six o'clock in the evening, for in travelling every thing should be seen. The inquisitor having risen from his seat at six o'clock, announced that he was going to preach his Lent sermon, and that after the sermon he would return and resume his place. I followed this strange kind of preacher to church, to hear what could proceed from such unhallowed lips. The subject of his sermon was purgatory; and I give a specimen of it, which merits notice, as it will give an idea of the religious opinions and instruction of the country.

“ When any of ye, my brethren, becomes sick, he hastens to send for a physician, and spares no expence to obtain relief from his sufferings and effectuate his cure. And what are corporeal sufferings of the most painful kind, which we experience in this inferior world, in comparison with the dreadful torments by which souls detained in purgatory are afflicted? Nothing, my brethren, nothing! The inspired writers of the holy Roman church assure us, that the torments which are suffered in that place of expiation and purification, are, in every respect, equal to those of hell; with this sole difference, that in purgatory, angels

are the executioners of divine vengeance, and the souls detained there feel a certainty that their sufferings will have an end. But that termination, when does it take place? For a very small number it is at the end of a few days; for others, in some months! others, after many years: in short, it is prolonged to many centuries, according as the venial sins they expiate, are removed from, or approach to the nature of mortal sin. However, your kind and tender mother, the holy Roman church, august spouse of Jesus Christ, to whom alone he has confided the care of your souls, and without the pale of which there is nought but error and eternal damnation; this good and tender mother has conferred on all her ministers the power of the keys; that is to say, my brethren, that of shutting and opening the gates of purgatory, and of paradise. Thus it is, that through the merits of the indulgences granted by our most holy father the pope, the bishops, and by the blessed sacrifice of the mass, we can at all times open the gates of purgatory and paradise, and introduce into the seat of eternal felicity souls purified by the holy fire.

“ Oh! how adorable is the mercy of our Saviour! Oh! how precious is that power which he has conferred on his church! but how ungrateful you are for so much kindness; how insensible to the soft sentiments of pity and of sympathy for your suffering neighbours and friends!

“ The church declares to you by my mouth,



that the pains of purgatory are not inferior to those of hell, and that their duration alone makes the difference. I shall sketch to you, my brethren, the picture of those sufferings. There are felt at the same time the extremes of heat and cold; that is to say, that whilst one has, for instance, the feet and hands frozen, the other parts of the body are a prey to the devouring fire. Horrible serpents introduce themselves into the bowels and entrails of some, whilst their neighbours are covered with nauseous reptiles which suck their blood, and disgusting toads eject their scum and urine on the faces of others! They are also tormented with the most excruciating hunger and thirst!!! Such, my brethren, are the frightful torments experienced by those of your relations and friends now there; such is also the fate that awaits almost all of you; and I venture to say all, unless I can suppose that you possess the purity and innocence of angels at the moment your souls shall be separated from your bodies.

“It is, however, still in your power to put an end to these cruel calamities, and to permit those unhappy beings to enjoy the celestial beatitude; which is, you know, my brethren, by taking indulgences and causing masses to be said for their deliverance. And yet, how negligent you are of this pious duty! Ah, wretches! stony hearts! the same fate awaits you! God grant that your children, that your neighbours, when you die, may have as little compassion on you, and forget

you as soon, as you shew lack of pity and remembrance of those who are gone before you !”

At this pathetic morsel of the sermon, there was nothing to be heard in the church but groans and blows on the breast. Four churchwardens were busily employed, two carrying about indulgences for sale, and two others receiving money for saying masses. When the distributors of indulgences passed me, I took two of them, one for purgatory, and the other to have leave to eat meat and eggs. The latter was very necessary to show my hosts, and enable me to eat meat without reproach.

Two days afterwards I went to Assoncion, the capital of the colony : there I saw the inquisitor, who was walking on a terrace with another priest ; he saluted me kindly, and invited me into his friend’s house. “ Well,” said he, “ I saw you the evening before last at church ; I was charmed with your attention : you bought some indulgences, this was really edifying in a Frenchman ! But then, tell me sincerely, were you satisfied with my sermon ? ” — “ I could not be otherwise, most reverend father : above all I admired the fertility of your imagination, and the frightful picture of purgatory. They must be heretics or infidels who would not take indulgences and cause masses to be said, after hearing a sermon so hideously pathetic ! ”

Though my reply was pronounced in a most serious tone, the old inquisitor burst into a fit of immoderate laughter, and of the most malignant



kind. "I venture to say, that in your own mind you make a good jest of my sermon, and say to yourself, oh, the mountebank! the impostor!" "By no means: on the contrary I have the greatest respect, most reverend father, for all you utter." "You are only ridiculing me; but what the devil should I preach to those ignorant and vulgar beings who were my audience? The pure language of the gospel would be as unintelligible as that of reason to their brutish minds. These disgusting and frightful images, of toads, reptiles, serpents, icy cold, and devouring flames, can alone move their coarse faculties, and are very well adapted to their limited understandings."—"Since you speak to me with so little reserve, most reverend father, will you permit me to reply to you in the same manner?" "Most certainly," replied the old man. "Do you not believe, it often happens that many of your congregation, shocked at the absurdity of your purgatory, finish by the opinion that the whole doctrine of christianity is only an imposture? What happens then? You had taught them the moral duties, founded on this belief, which they despise and reject, and they renounce the practice of duties prescribed by the gospel and reason, the same day in which they cease to believe in those dogmas. If you would limit yourself to instructing them in evangelical morality, they would be less vicious, because they would then believe in principles, which far from being revolting to common sense, have nothing

but what is agreeable and consoling to a well disposed mind, when united with a good judgment. For the greater part of those who persevere in their faith, confess freely that they make their religion consist in outward ceremonies and trifling observances. You have given so much importance to those external practices, that it is in them most of your flock place their religion. They serve as a covering to hypocrisy, vices, and even to crimes in many others. I know a devotee who is the most vain, violent, malignant and envious of mankind: he has passed his life in pining at the prosperity of his neighbours, slandering them, quarrelling with his wife, and submitting to all her caprices. This man hates his children, and obliges them by every kind of ill usage to abandon their home: yet this is a sanctified man, who goes to church two or three times each day, and would believe himself damned if he were to eat meat on Friday, &c. His wife was the most refined hypocrite from the age of twelve: at that period she was turned out of a convent for a most perfidious and base action. She, too, has played the saint all her life, and under that mask has imposed on weak minds; and has always been seconded by rogues and hypocrites, who represent her as an angel. It is true that she has enriched more than one of them with the property of her family, which she has reduced to poverty. Her son happening to surprise her one day, she fearing that he would discover it to his



father, employed all her influence with her husband, who was weak-minded and passionate, to render his son odious to him. Oppressed with ill usage, the young man was obliged to leave his country. Some time afterwards, having perceived that her daughter was acquainted with the same fact, she did all in her power to turn the girl's father against her. At last, the daughter was stabbed by a maid servant. This crime was accompanied with the most dreadful circumstances.

“ You know, reverend father, that bigots are generally reputed malignant, egotistical and deceitful: yet those are the three vices against which Jesus Christ has warned us. Why do you not preach continually to the faithful the pardon of injuries, charity, and sincerity? The practice of those virtues, I know, requires greater efforts over ourselves, than abstinence from flesh-meats in Lent, or a conformity to frivolous ceremonies. I see that you have a mind too well formed, and too observing, not to be aware that a great number of believers think they expiate all their vices, and render themselves agreeable to God, by the exercise of these practices. Employ your eloquence to destroy this baneful error, to unmask the hypocrites; thunder against them, as Jesus Christ did against the Pharisees; instruct young people, who are naturally sincere and susceptible, that it is possible to become agreeable to Heaven, and estimable among men,

only by the practice of those virtues, which consist in rendering our fellow creatures better and more happy."

Here ended my sermon. The inquisitor confessed frankly that he thought as I did; "but," added he, "if I were to preach according to your principles, what difference would there be between me and a Protestant preacher? I have no desire to become a reformer, I would lose my time in that vocation, with a people so ignorant and depraved as my flock. The most rational and useful thing I can do, is to instruct them according to the principles of the belief in which we have been brought up."

As bulls and indulgences formed a topic in the sermon of the Margarita preacher, I think that in displaying the virtues attributed to them in the Spanish colonies, I shall fulfil the duty I have imposed on myself of depicting the manners, religion, and intellectual acquirements of the inhabitants of the countries I have visited. I know that what I am about to relate will displease certain persons, who twenty years ago would have thought I had spoken with too much moderation; and others, whose intentions I respect much more than their knowledge. I do not, nor do I wish to belong to any party or faction: those to whom I am well known, know how opposite to my disposition it is to insult any person whatever. But in describing a country so little known to Europeans, a country which



is on the point of becoming so conspicuous in the political world, I ought not to omit any thing that may contribute to complete the description of its inhabitants.

The bulls of indulgences, as every one knows, derive their origin from the crusades. Pope Alexander VI. made a crusade of the conquest of America, by granting indulgences to those who engaged in it; and though for a long time war has not been carried on against the natives, still indulgences are annually sent to Spanish America.

The titles of these bulls are as follows: *Bull of the living*; *Bull of the dead*; *Bull of white-meats and eggs*; *Bull of composition*.\*

The reader will not perhaps be displeased to be informed of their miraculous properties: I shall begin with that called the common bull of the living.

In the first place, all the grace and favour of

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\* A Spaniard whom I have met since this work was put to press, has told me I had forgotten the bull of the Cruzada; a bull by which the Popes granted a great number of indulgences, privileges and exemptions in this and the other world, to those who buy them. This bull is sold at two reals and a half ( $6\frac{1}{4}d.$ ) to the common people, the rich pay for it in proportion to their fortunes. It renders annually to the King of Spain £170,000, of which the New World pays one half. It was granted to the Kings of Spain and Portugal to assist them in making war against the Mahometans of Africa and Asia; and as for a long time those wars have ceased, the produce of the bull of the Cruzada has served or was deemed to serve in aid of the expences of wars against the Indians who refused to embrace the Catholic religion.

Heaven, that can be desired, is attached to its possession: with this bull in the pocket, and faith as to its power in the head, a firm believer cannot fail to obtain whatever he demands from Heaven; and if it should happen that his petitions were not heard, it is not, as may well be supposed, the fault of the bull, but the insufficiency of his faith. In such a case, it is necessary to buy and re-buy other copies of the bull, until what is intreated of Heaven be obtained. A volume would not be sufficient to explain and enumerate all its virtues; I shall limit myself to indicating the most valuable.

The fortunate possessor of the bull of the living, if he had murdered his father, mother and children, if he were guilty of incest and of crimes the most outrageous to nature, has only to seek a priest, who, at the sight of this miraculous paper, cannot refuse him absolution; when suddenly he becomes reconciled to Heaven, and his conscience remains as tranquil, as far removed from remorse, as that of Cæsar Borgia, when, furnished with the previous absolution given to him by his father, he departed on an excursion to assassinate or poison some prince of his time. Blasphemies against God, atheism, &c. are also pardoned in those who buy this bull. There is but one crime (without doubt, the worst of all crimes,) incredulity in the oracles of the Vatican, vulgarly called heresy, which resists their power.

He who buys the bull of the living, enjoys the



inestimable advantage in a hot climate, of being able to hear the masses which are said every day in these countries, one hour before sunrise; to have it celebrated at his own home when the church of his parish is interdicted; to be buried in consecrated ground, if the church-yard is interdicted; to eat meat on fast days, and all the meals required by the appetite on days of abstinence, saving some exceptions which the present Pope has commanded by his bulls of January 1, 1804.

He who buys the bull in Spanish America, gains certain indulgences of the greatest importance in the world to come, of which the unhappy European Catholic can only avail himself by making a journey to Rome. But what appears most wonderful in this bull, is, that notwithstanding all that is promised by the acquisition of one copy, yet he who buys two of them obtains double advantages: a mysterious virtue of the greatest value to rich believers!

The tariff of this bull is proportioned to the rank and wealth of the faithful.

FIRST CLASS.

For viceroys, captains general, their wives, and each of their full-grown children, fifteen dollars.

SECOND CLASS.

For bishops, inquisitors, abbots, priors, canons, dukes, marquisses, counts, and other noblemen;

for members of the audiencia, general officers, colonels, corregidores, alcaldes, &c.; as also persons having a capital of twelve thousand dollars; even for persons who having only a capital of twelve hundred dollars, are yet alcaldes or mayors of villages, three dollars.

## THIRD CLASS.

The bull of the living costs one dollar and a half to each person having a capital of six thousand dollars, without any civil or military employment.

## FOURTH CLASS.

The poor who desire to avail themselves of the advantages attached to this bull, may obtain it at the moderate price of two reals and a half, about one shilling.

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After the bull of the living naturally comes that of the dead: it is a real passport, by virtue of which a soul goes direct to Heaven, without having been purified by the fire, and other torments of purgatory. As soon as a man dies, a relation or friend goes to a priest to buy a bull, on which is written the name of the deceased, and at that instant his soul flies, as pure as that of an angel, to the asylum of the blessed. The wealthy, and persons in easy circumstances, pay six reals for this bull, about half a crown, and the poor two reals and a half.

I have more than once heard the poor in this



country lament, and utter the most frightful shrieks at the death of their relations; the grief for their loss was trifling in comparison with that felt by knowing they were in purgatory, from the want of this trifling sum for delivering them. They run about in every direction, begging alms with tears, in the hope of procuring as much money as may enable them to buy bulls for releasing the souls of their relations from purgatory. I have more than once had the happiness of calming their grief, relieving a soul from that state, contributing to the comforts of a Spanish priest, and of attracting to myself a thousand benedictions, for a quarter of a dollar.

Yet let it not be supposed that these bulls and indulgences dispense with the saying of masses for the dead. Alas! there are many venial sins that have a strong resemblance to mortal ones! Masses only, and masses by hundreds, can, in this case, mitigate the anger of the great Judge: who, affected by these numerous sacrifices, consents to treat an equivocal sin as a venial one. In all the churches of this country there are pictures representing heaven and purgatory: in a corner of the picture is a priest saying mass; at the side are people giving money for the celebration of mass, and souls starting out of purgatory when masses have been said for them. They are received by the archangel St. Michael, who is depicted holding a pair of scales in his hand, one of which is full of the money for the masses, and appears to

sink, whilst the red hot souls, like boiled lobsters, throw themselves into the other scale, from which they fly to Heaven!

## THE BULL OF WHITE MEAT AND EGGS.

All the world knows that arsenic is not more injurious to the body, than eggs and milk to the soul during Lent: but as there are stomachs which, in that time of abstinence, cannot do without milk and eggs, the Roman church dispenses with its observance to persons who buy this bull. It has, in its kindness, established four rates, by which all the faithful, poor or rich, may profit by this indulgence. The greatest personages pay six dollars each, the second class three dollars, the third class one dollar and a half, and the poor three reals.

## THE BULL OF COMPOSITION.

Of all possible bulls, this is without doubt the most wonderful, and that of which the moral results are the most evident. Pope Alexander VI. was very worthy of being the author of it; but that which I cannot comprehend is, that the said pope having had virtuous and enlightened pontiffs for his successors, they did not desist from sending such a bull to America: so much do men stickle for their authority and wealth, whatever may have been their origin!

Persons who are little versed in these matters,



will find a difficulty in believing that this bull has the virtue of rendering the robber or usurper of the property of others, the legitimate proprietor. The author of the bull had stipulated as a condition in it, that the thief should not know the person he had robbed : thus, a pickpocket who in a crowd steals a watch or a purse, he who robs on the highway or in a house, becomes legitimate proprietor of what he has stolen, provided he knows not whom he has plundered. The commissary general of the holy crusade published at Toledo, in 1758, very curious instructions for the faithful of Spanish America ; instructions which singularly extend the faculties of the bull. Never did casuist or Jesuit imagine any thing more ingenious for calming consciences troubled with remorse : nothing can be more lucid and conclusive than the following reasonings of the casuist of Toledo. All our property coming from God, who has a right to deprive us of it, and give it to others by whatever means he may deem proper to use, it is evident that our most holy father the Pope, who represents God on earth, ought also to have the right to legitimate the possession of such property. It is that which is obtained by employing in pious works a part of what has been acquired by fraud or violence, and it is the confessor who regulates amicably with his penitent the quota for those pious works, or in other words the portion for the church !” The bull of composition costs two dollars and a quarter without dis-

tion to every one ; but there are objects stolen, of which it is not possible to become proprietor, without buying fifty bulls.

A passage, remarkable for the generosity and nobleness of its sentiments, occurs in the edict of the commissary general of the holy crusade, dated Madrid, September 14th, 1801. " The price (of bulls) is somewhat raised, owing to the new expences of government, and the necessity of redeeming the royal bonds, which a scarcity of money had caused to be issued in time of war ! " A statement of what the bulls produce to the clergy and exchequer will be found in another chapter.

The Island of Margarita, which was discovered by Columbus in 1498, was granted by the Emperor Charles V. to Marceto de Villalobos in 1524 : it was in 1561, the theatre of the robberies and cruelties of the famous Lopez de Aguirre.\* This island gave birth to Francisco

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\* Lopez de Aguirre, a Basque, was an audacious robber, who spread terror in South America, about the middle of the sixteenth century, during the civil wars in Peru, between the partizans of Pizarro and Almagro. He had been sent by the viceroy Gonzales Pizarro to explore the navigation and country near the river Amazons, under the orders of Don Pedro d'Orsua. The banditti who composed this expedition, murdered Orsua, because he was a moral man, and wanted to restrain them within the limits of their duty. They proclaimed Lopez d'Aguirre their chief, and gave him the title of king. After having ravaged the kingdom of New Grenada, the Island of Trinidad, and that of Margarita, the countries of Venezuela, Santa Martha, &c. Aguirre became the executioner of his accomplices, of whom he daily put some to



Faxardo, celebrated in the annals of Venezuela, for his heroic virtues and humanity. He was the son of a Spaniard of the noble family of Faxardo, and of Donna Isabel, daughter of Charayma, cacique of the tribe of Guaiqueris, who inhabit the vallies of Mayna, in the province of Caraccas. The chronicles of that country, and Oviedo y Banos, the historian of Venezuela, represent this Indian lady, as one of those women whom nature occasionally produces, to command men by the ascendancy of their genius.

I regret much that the limits and plan of this work do not permit me to recount all that Faxardo and his mother did for civilizing the Indians, and subjecting them more by persuasion than force to the Castilian government. This extraordinary man, who was destitute of education, but in whom nature had united the most sublime virtues, great talents, and heroic courage; after having rendered the highest services to his countrymen and to the Castilian monarch, was

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death, because he fancied nothing but conspiracies against him; they all, with the exception of one, abandoned him at the battle of Borburata, and went over to the royal camp, crying, "God save the king!" The commandant, Gareia de Parades, granted them pardon in the name of his sovereign. Reduced to despair, he addressed these words to his only daughter, who accompanied him in his travels: "Commend your soul to God, for I am going to take your life, that you may never have the shame of being called the daughter of a traitor;" and a moment afterwards he shot her in the breast with his musket. While wandering about pursued by despair and remorse, he was taken, shot and quartered, after having requested a few minutes respite, to make important discoveries for the interests of his sovereign.

thrown out of favour and forgotten; a victim to the jealousy of base and contemptible calumniators.

Faxardo built at the port of Caravellada, near La Guayra, a town, to which he gave the name of Collado, in honour of the governor of that name. It was he also who discovered the gold mine of San Francisco, which gained him the hatred of the inhabitants of Tocuyo, who also had mines. The Governor Collado, jealous of the glory of Faxardo, exiled him to the town to which he had given his name; and which it soon lost, to resume that of Caravellada, as if to punish the governor for his mean jealousy. Since that time La Guayra has become the principal port of Caraccas, while Caravellada has dwindled into a village inhabited by fishermen.

Though the soil of Margarita is arid and unproductive, this island soon became populous, as the pearl fishery attracted numerous navigators. The Dutch, jealous of its prosperity, burnt and destroyed Pompatar, the principal town in 1662.

The colony of Margarita was for a long time only a district of the province of Cumana, and governed by a chief who had the title of lieutenant governor, under the orders of the Governor of Cumana. It is about twenty-five years since the Spanish cabinet made it a separate government, owing to the importance of its position, both in a military and commercial light. However, the Governor of Cumana, who was



himself subordinate to the captain general of Carracas, preserved the title of military inspector of the Government of Margarita, which was the reason of its being considered as a dependency to that of Cumana, before the late revolution.

The Island of Margarita has three ports, the most important is that of Pompatar, situated on the south-east coast. It is a large and fine basin, in which vessels are defended from winds and tempests: its entrance is protected on one side by a fortress, and on the other by batteries. Those are the principal fortifications of the island: there is a considerable contraband trade there with the English and French colonies, &c. and also with Cumana.

Pueblo de la Mar is another port, or to speak more correctly, an open roadstead; it is a place of little trade, and is situated at a league and a half westward of Pompatar. Pueblo del Norte is, as its name indicates, a village situated in the northern part of the island: a coral reef renders the entrance of this port difficult to mariners who are not accustomed to it. Two batteries defend its entrance against privateers. Near this port is a village inhabited only by fishermen.

The vallies of San Juan, Santa Margarita, and Los Robles, have each a village which bears their name. Assoncion is the capital of the island, and the residence of the governor. This little town is pretty well built, although its inhabitants are not wealthy; but there is every appearance

of comfort and industry there. It has two parish churches, and a convent of recollets. During Lent in 1807, I attended a ball and festival given by the Governor Gaspar Cagigal. There were two hundred persons at table, among whom I observed several very pretty women, well made, and dressed with an elegant simplicity. Many priests and friars were also at the festival: my old friend, the inquisitor, was the most conspicuous of them all, and made himself singularly agreeable. He was dressed in a beautiful habit of black silk, with embroidery and green ribbands, and a gold cross embroidered on his mantle. The other ecclesiastics were also in cassocks of black silk, and the father guardian of the recollets had a gown of puce-coloured taffeta, and flesh coloured silk stockings. This friar is a creole of Caraccas, a very fine man, witty, learned, and benevolent, but a great *dandy*, like almost all the natives of Caraccas.

The agriculture of the island scarcely suffices for the maintenance of its inhabitants. Maize, cassava, and bananas are their principal resources: the bananas are excellent, but very small, owing to the aridity of the soil, and dryness of the climate. The inhabitants cultivate in small proportions, and for their own consumption only, all the productions of the Antilles, the sugar cane, coffee and cocoa trees, &c.; they rear a great many goats and sheep, which, though lean, give delicious milk, owing to the aromatic herbs on



which they feed. They have all kinds of fowl at a very trifling price, and have a little trade in them. Living is still cheaper at Margarita than at Cumana or Caraccas. I have bought a capon there for fivepence, a dozen of eggs for twopence halfpenny, two bottles of milk for the same, a fish of ten or twelve pounds for the same, a turkey for one shilling, a lamb of two months, for fifteen pence, &c. The fishermen sell or exchange their fish for cakes of maize, bananas, cassava bread, &c. I know of no inn, properly speaking, in this island; but a stranger is received in every house there when he offers to bear a part of the expenses. My countrymen would not conform, in regard to me, with this custom of the country: having refused to receive any remuneration for the kind and generous hospitality with which they received me.

The climate of Margarita is very healthy, it is there that persons go, who have contracted obstructions and other diseases in the humid and unwholesome parts of the Island of Trinidad and the continent. This island has only three rivulets, which, however, are sufficiently large to turn mills, when such are established: their waters are limpid; that of the little river which runs by the town of Assoncion, and which in some places passes over a bed of amphibolic schistus, contains sulphurated iron, magnesia, &c. The inhabitants prefer drinking water from

ponds, though it is always turbid. The first time they presented this water to me at Pompatar, I refused it with disgust; but I was assured that it was more wholesome than rain water, and they laughed at the grimaces I made. The rich have filtering stones; others drink as they draw it, and do not find any bad effects from it. This water contains a great quantity of calcareous marl.

The fisheries produce the principal object of trade at Margarita: they are placed at the Islet of Coche, which belongs to government. Two merchants of Margarita had the privilege of this fishery in 1807, and they carried it on at Coche: the men who were employed in it, were Indians of Margarita. It was not freely, but by order of government that those natives worked in the fishery, at the scanty pay of a real (five pence) per day, and bread of maize or cassava. M. Depons is wrong in saying that they give them only maize bread for their entire food. I have been twice at the fishery of the brothers Maneyro, the most considerable of the two, and they ate as much fresh or salt fish as they chose; more than three hundred Indians of both sexes and all ages, were employed there in 1807.

The quantities of fish caught are incredible. Twice a day they draw a seine of two hundred feet long, and it seldom happens that at each drag they have not at least ten to twelve quintals of



fish. This net sometimes contains so many, that they are obliged to cut the meshes, in order to let some of the fish escape which they are unable to haul on shore. It would be too tedious to describe the different kinds which are taken : the most common is the mullet of the Caribbean Islands, which the Spaniards call lissas : this fish has not been well described ; it resembles a herring.

I have always been surprized that the contirou, and balahou, another non-descript fish, are never caught on this coast, nor on those of Trinidad and Tobago. It is not the *centriscus scopolax*, or the blower, as some writers have believed. The balahou has certainly the same snout, but its body is much longer. Those fish are common at the Antilles and even at Grenada, which is only thirty leagues distance from Trinidad. They are sometimes caught, but very rarely, outside the Dragon's mouths.

On the coast of Trinidad, Tobago, and those of South America, are found many kinds of fish which do not exist at the Antilles. It is also remarkable that the Antilles are deficient in a great number of species of vegetables and animals that are found in Trinidad, Guiana, and the adjacent provinces. The observing naturalist is struck with this difference in countries so near each other, and of which the climate is almost the same.

The salt works would be lucrative objects for Margarita, if salt were not so very cheap in all

those countries. A barrel of salt, not purified, weighing about three hundred pounds, is sold for about twelvepence halfpenny at Margarita. Poultry, wild fowl, goats or kids, sheep hammocks, and beautiful cotton stockings are articles of exportation.

This island is divided into two parts, which communicate with each other by an isthmus or natural causeway, that is scarcely more than from eighty to one hundred paces broad, and in some parts, from ten to twelve feet only above the level of the sea.

The mountain of Macanou is the most elevated of this island: it is above two thousand feet high, according to M. de Humboldt, who measured it trigonometrically, and is composed of micaceous schistus. It is an important point for navigators to make, who go from Europe or from North or South America to Cumana, Barcelona and La Guayra: as they are obliged to sail between Margarita and the Islet of Coche, to avoid running the risk of being carried to leeward by the currents.

Margarita had, in 1807, a population of eight thousand whites, five thousand five hundred mixed blood, one thousand eight hundred Indians, and about nine hundred slaves, making a total of 16,200 persons. This island is sixteen marine leagues in its greatest length, six in its greatest breadth, in some parts only two or three leagues broad, and its surface is thirty-one square leagues.



After remaining six weeks at Margarita, I was necessitated to freight a vessel, for which I paid one hundred and fifty dollars, to take us to Guadaloupe: it was a small decked bark of eight tons burden: contrary winds drove us to a desert island, called Blanquilla, situated at eighteen leagues north west of Margarita, where we anchored and remained three days. This island is nearly three leagues in length, and a league and a half broad; though it is represented as much smaller on the maps. Its soil is a white tufa (decomposed pumice) sandy and sterile. It has, on the northern side, some rocks of little elevation, of gneiss or flaky granite. Its vegetation consists of cactus, mimosas, and thorny shrubs: there are no vegetables but such as grow on the sea coast and the most arid parts of the province of Cumana. Its surface is undulated, and towards the center is a platform elevated about two hundred feet above the sea. This island contains wild cattle, which are very savage; probably because they are incessantly hunted. In order to kill them, the hunters gain a small eminence that commands a pond of water to which they resort to drink. There are also a great number of wild dogs: in the day-time they avoid a man; they do not bark, but at night howl dismally. These animals feed on lizards and other reptiles.

At the beginning of the French revolution, a planter of Guadaloupe went to settle in this island with a score of negroes, to form a cotton

plantation there ; but the Spanish government, who would not permit any one to fix himself there, drove him away. There are a great many parts of this little island very proper for cultivating cotton.

Having sailed early on the morning of the third day after our arrival at this dreary spot, a vessel hove in sight and gave chase to us : in consequence of which we determined to return to Margarita, and it was with the greatest difficulty this object could be effected. Unwilling to run the risk of capture a second time, and by no means satisfied with the character of the master whose vessel I had hired, I formed the resolution of quitting her, and returning to Cumana, where I fortunately found a ship bound to Guadaloupe : we accordingly embarked and reached that island after a passage of four days.



## CHAP. III.

MANNERS and CUSTOMS.—Various Casts.—Conquistadores.—Creoles.—Idea of Nobility.—Refutation of De Paw's doctrines.—Mental Qualifications of the Creoles.—Reflections on Concubinage.—Parental Affection of the Creoles.—Account of the Guahiros.—Quadrupeds.—Traits of Manners.—Dress, &c. at Caraccas.—Singular Fashion at Cumana.—Anecdote of an Indian Female.—Remarks on several Animals.—Paca.—Pecary.—Catalogue of Birds.—Insects.—Trees and Shrubs.—Anecdotes of the Boa Strictor.—Remarks.—VEGETABLE WORLD.—M. de la Barrere's Herbal.—Reflections.—Geological Attributes of Trinidad.—The Sugar Cane.—Introduction and Mode of cultivating the Otaheite Cane.—Fattening Qualities of the Cane.—Suggestions.—Proposed Improvements in Sugar Plantations.—The COCOA TREE.—Nutritious Virtues of Cocoa.—The Tree described.—*Epidendrum Vanilla*.—Coffee.—Thoughts on its cultivation—Mode of planting Coffee.—And various Hints on the Subject.—*Podocarpus*.—A Reflection.—Geological Observations.

Four casts compose the population of this country, like those of the other Spanish colonies: the whites, Indians, negroes, and people of colour or mixed race. These casts are subdivided into whites born in Europe, vulgarly called Gachupines; white Creoles, descendants of Europeans; Mestizos, a mixture of whites and Indians; Zamboes, a mixture of Indian and negroes; and of mulattos, a mixture of whites and negroes.

The Spaniards born in Europe consider them-

selves as a superior class to other whites: to have been born in Europe is a kind of nobility in the Spanish colonies. Not that the whites born in the new world have pretensions to illustrious birth. In the government of Caraccas, as in the other Spanish colonies, almost all the whites pretend to be descended from the ancient Conquistadores; but whatever importance they may attach to this origin, they are not the less considered by the other casts as inferior to the Europeans, for this plain reason, that the latter are appointed by the sovereign to nearly all the lucrative and important places.

The Creoles of the French colonies were much better treated; they not only enjoyed the privileges of the Europeans, but it was sufficient to be born of a white family to enjoy all the privileges of persons born of noble families.

The colonial institutions founded by the ancient Spanish government, were only calculated for disseminating and maintaining distrust and hatred among the different casts which divided, rather than composed, the population of those countries. To divide for the purpose of governing, was the moral resource employed by the ancient Spanish government for retaining its colonies in the yoke. Thus, you looked in vain for that frank, generous, hospitable, and heroic character in the Spanish Creole, which so eminently distinguishes the Creoles of the British and French colonies from other modern nations.



It is not that nature has refused to the Creoles of the Spanish colonies the gifts of the head and heart: they have, in general, a great deal of wit and penetration, and foreigners acknowledge their integrity in commercial affairs; but among themselves there reigns a spirit of suspicion, jealousy and etiquette, which banishes cordiality from their societies. They scarcely speak of any thing but law suits, while the colonies swarm with barristers and attornies. These two professions are almost the only career left open to the ambition of the Creole youth, who show too great a propensity for the subtleties of legal chicanery. A great number become priests or monks: a white family in which there are three or four sons, would think itself dishonoured, if one of them did not embrace an ecclesiastical life. Formerly a great many nuns were professed; but from the irregularities which have occurred in convents, and the perversion of morals that has taken place in them, the monks, for some years past, have found great difficulty in recruiting them from young women of respectable families.

The army has been opened for some years to the youth of the Spanish colonies. Charles III. established colonial regiments on the plan of those of France. Boldness and activity are the characteristics of the Spanish as well as the British and French Creole. The institution of colonial regiments and of militia in the Spanish colonies, was received therefore with transport: an epaulette and a

pressible charm for all Creoles : the sight of those decorations make the heart palpitate in a young Creole of fourteen or fifteen years of age ; he scarcely breathes, and sighs only for the moment when he may put them on !

The Spanish government, in forming colonial regiments, did not imitate the unjust and absurd regulation of our ancient monarchs, by which no man of colour could arrive at the rank of an officer ; it had the good sense not to insult and stigmatize collectively a numerous class, degraded in the British and French colonies, by prejudices and laws as unreasonable as they are unjust and impolitic. In the Spanish colonies, for some years past, officers have been selected from among the people of colour.

In no place, however, have the prejudices of birth and the word nobility, so much influence as in the Spanish colonies : three fourths of the white families call themselves noble. Almost all pretend to be descended from the ancient Conquistadores, or officers employed in the conquest of those regions. The province of Caraccas reckons among its inhabitants, six titled personages (Títulos de Castilla,) three counts and three marquesses.

The high notions which the Spanish Creoles have of the nobility of their extraction, does not prevent the family of a young Creole lady, rich and well educated, from thinking itself honoured in having an European Spaniard for a son-in-law,



although unknown, pennyless, and frequently without education. This prejudice began to diminish some years past, and it changed into a commencement of aversion to Spain. *Somos Americanos y no Gachupines* ;\* “we are Americans, and not Spaniards,” the Creoles of Venezuela and other Spanish possessions will frequently exclaim in a tone of ill-humoured haughtiness.

There is not a single instance of a white Creole of the provinces of Venezuela, having been guilty of assassination : I have been assured that this crime has never been committed there, excepting by Andalusians, or the Zamboes.

The slaves in Venezuela, and the other Spanish possessions, enjoy a privilege unknown in the French and English colonies : it is that of obliging their masters to liberate them, on their paying the sum of three hundred dollars. The slave treated with injustice or cruelty by his master, has a right to carry his complaint to the judge, who may order that he be sold to some other master of known humanity.

No well informed man now believes in the ridiculous paradox of De Pauw, who asserts that all the American races are of a degenerated and inferior order ; it would result from his extravagant system, that man and animals are as

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\* They have given to Europe the nickname of Gachupina, and to Europeans that of Gachupines : they also call Europeans Chapetones.

much subjected to the influence of soil and climate, as the plants which vegetate there, and have no organs of loco-motion. The picture he gives of the physical and mental imbecility of the American species, is only a false and coarse caricature.\* In the temperate and cold climates of America, man has in no respect degenerated from his European ancestor. In some parts of that continent, he is, perhaps, physically and morally superior.

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\* A French writer, M. de Bercy, who has lately published his opinion on the comparative virtues of Europeans and Americans, observes, "Those whom we are accustomed to call barbarians and savages, are infinitely less entitled to these epithets than ourselves, notwithstanding the refinement and civilization we boast. Equally if not more exempted from prejudice, the inhabitants of America neither create factitious wants; or seek imaginary sources of happiness; they do not encourage either spies or informers; in that country, you are not shocked with the sight of magistrates, who ought to be the guardians of religion and morality, stimulating the vile and wicked to betray innocence, or hurry into crime. There, the oath of a perjured miscreant, is insufficient to consign a respectable character to the walls of a prison, much less ensure his ultimate condemnation. Their tranquillity is not disturbed by the incessant calls of the tax-gatherer, or their feelings mortified by the inequality of conditions.

"More just than the Europeans, the people of America only arm to repel aggressions, and not to forge fetters for their fellow-men, to immolate by crusades and assassinations, like those of the fifteenth century, and the day of Saint Bartholomew, or in *just* and *necessary* wars, such as those which have so often desolated Europe, either for the aggrandizement of some families and their factious adherents, or with a view of suppressing liberal principles, and imprescriptible right."—ED.



If ever the American can put all his faculties in motion, I do not hesitate to predict that he will surpass the European. He is, in fact, a new man, and a new character, like the great country in which he is born.

Partial or ignorant writers have said that the American Islands have never produced a man distinguished in literature and the fine arts ; but Martinico, for instance, did it not give birth to the late M. du Buc ? Could he have been an ordinary person, I allude to Blanchetiere Bellevue, who, never having left that colony before, nor received a literary education, at the age of thirty-six, appeared like a meteor in the constituent assembly, where he was admired for his captivating eloquence, and the variety of his knowledge ? The celebrated physician Lamure was a Creole. France, Spain, and Great Britain, reckon among their celebrated existing characters a great number of Creoles ; and yet those countries are in a manner but newly born.

Those who have had the means of observing the youth from these regions, who are sent to Europe for their education, have had the justice to declare, that they are eminently adapted for all the sciences and arts ; and that, in general, they surpass the common run of Europeans in the justness and clearness of their ideas ; which is the principal indication of good taste, and the characteristic of true genius. It is true, the greater part of them neglect to cultivate their

talents, when they return home : I well know that the heat of the climate inclines them to indolence ; but it must also be acknowledged that there is no institution in those colonies which stimulates men to improve their intellectual faculties. The wealthy live in pleasures and indolence, whilst those who wish to augment their fortunes, have their minds continually bent on that object. Add to these causes, the excessive tendency which is felt in this climate for sensual pleasures ; the necessity of commanding the negroes, beings who are usually stupid and stubborn, the management of a gang of whom absorbs the attention of the most active and intelligent man ; it may then be conceived why, in the present state of things, it is so difficult to be occupied with success, in cultivating the arts and sciences, which, of all other occupations, require so much time, tranquillity, retirement and independence.

In Europe the Americans are constantly accused of possessing bad morals ; but what is it that hypocrisy and prudery would have us understand by good and bad morals ? In my opinion good morals consist principally in a benevolent disposition, in the practice of that virtue, which, according to the expression of the divine author of the gospel, expiates a multitude of sins. To have good morals, or to be virtuous, which appear to me synonymous, is to perform our duties well, by contributing as much as lies in our power to render our fellow creatures good and happy. A



good father or mother, whose whole conduct tends to render their children happy ; a good son, husband or neighbour, those who relieve the calamities of others by all their means, are, I think, virtuous beings, and entitled to the praise of possessing good morals.

But by good morals, a certain class of men understand exclusively the abstinence from sensual enjoyments ; or, at least, that they should be carefully concealed ; for according to those modern Pharisees, to sin in secret is not to sin at all !

Heaven forbid that I should declare myself an apologist for concubinage ! And where is the iron-hearted man who can contemplate without agonizing emotion, the hospitals in which deserted children swarm ; those interesting and unfortunate victims, who should cry vengeance against the brutal insensibility of the parents who brought them into existence ! But it must also be confessed, to the honour of the prudent Europeans, that their libertinism is conducted with great mystery : among them, the grand point is not to be virtuous, but to conceal their vices, and above all things that it should not injure their fortune. Concubinage, it is true, is common in the colonies ; but what is such a fault, when compared with adultery ? That indeed is the vice, which when not sufficiently stigmatized by public opinion, is most degrading to a people. Wherever it is frequent, none of those fine family affec-

tions can exist, which are the sources of happiness and the social virtues. The cohabitation of a colonist with his housekeeper, is a kind of left-handed marriage; and even when it happens that he dissolves that connection, he preserves a great regard for his children and makes their happiness one of his chief objects.

Adultery\* is very rare among them, and therefore the Creole wives are the best of mothers.

I have no hesitation in asserting with all impartial persons who have inhabited the colonies, that the colonists far surpass the inhabitants of the most primitive countries of the old world, in conjugal and paternal affection, and consequently in filial piety, generosity, beneficence, courage in adversity, sincerity, good nature and hospitality: all these virtues generally disseminated among them,

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\* The original legislators who created the morals of nations, did not omit to class adultery among the most odious crimes: "thou shalt not commit adultery," the divine legislator has expressly said in the decalogue. It is remarkable that he has not placed on the scale of prohibition the sexual sins among unmarried persons. In a less solemn injunction, incontinency is, it is true, prohibited among them as a fault; but the God of Israel signalizes and stigmatizes adultery as an excessively odious crime. It was held in great horror by the ancient nations, especially the Romans, in the best times of the Republic. The elder Cato seeing young men going to visit courtezans, said to them, "Courage, my friends: go and see the girls, but do not corrupt married women!" In England a man is at liberty either to sell his wife, if guilty of a *faux pas*, or he may sue for pecuniary damages in a court of justice; as if domestic happiness and personal honour were also legitimate objects of commercial speculation!!!



have in the free and cordial disposition of these people, an antique tint, which, since the latter years of the age of Louis XIV. and the shameful times of the Regency, have quite vanished from our manners.

If the Creole women are the best of mothers, their husbands are generally good fathers. We do not see among them such egotistical and heartless fathers and mothers, as are but too frequently met with in Europe ; people who think they do enough for their children, in bequeathing them what they have not been able to dissipate in this world, and cannot carry with them to the other. Such monsters are unknown to the New World ; and therefore filial piety is there equal to paternal tenderness.

The Creole father thinks, with reason, that he has a great duty to fulfil to his children ; that his first care should be to place them in society, in a situation at least as fortunate as that in which he was placed by his own father : in a sphere as respectable as that in which he finds himself. There is nothing more admirable in social order, than the ardour with which a Creole father exercises his industry to increase his fortune. “ I have a necessity to work, in order to augment my property ; I have a host of children, who did not ask me to bring them into the world : ” an expression trivial in appearance, but full of sense and affection, and which is well placed in the mouth of an American father. In those countries there are found even bachelor uncles who

are animated with the same kind affection for their nephews. Thus the Creole enjoys the pleasures of life, as soon as he becomes capable of it, whilst a great number of Europeans, to use a vulgar expression, obtain bread only when they lose their teeth; thanks to the hard-hearted stupidity of their parents!

Creoles generally consult only their taste, and seldom think of fortune, in forming a matrimonial union: it is common among them for a wealthy man to marry a woman without fortune; it is still more so, to see a rich heiress choose for her husband a man who is pennyless; and it is also very common to see a young couple marry without any other property than mutual love. They are young, and can make a fortune, say their worthy parents. In those countries where labour and industry are not disgraceful, and where every active and industrious person is sure to succeed, it often happens that such persons acquire independent fortunes. The Creoles think with reason, that in the choice of an union that ought to last for life, on which depends the happiness or misfortune of two individuals, and of those whom they may bring into the world, it is the affections of the parties which, above all, should be consulted. Thus it happens very seldom that parents are seen to oppose the inclinations of their children, provided there be nothing dishonourable in their choice. It is due to the Creoles, to say they are particularly delicate on



this point, and the women quite as much as the men. Nothing, for instance, would induce a young Creole lady to marry a man deemed a liar or a coward.

I shall terminate this sketch of the manners of the different tribes and casts which inhabit the Caraccas, by a few remarks on the Guahiros, of whom I have already spoken, and who inhabit the mountains of Merida, and the banks of the Rio de la Hache. The Spanish writers of this age, as well as the English and French who have copied them, speak of them as of a horde of ferocious robbers, who have resisted all the efforts made for civilizing them. The Spanish geographers rank them among the *Indios bravos*, a name which they give to all the tribes they have not been able to subject. The Spanish historians of the sixteenth century, relate that the Guahiros were, at that period, the friends of the Spanish inhabitants of Truxillo; that the missionaries had converted almost all of them to Christianity; that they shewed more capacity and taste than the other Indians for the arts of civilization, in which they had made a rapid progress in a few years. But the libertinism of the inhabitants of Truxillo caused bloody quarrels between them and the Guahiros. The former did not desist from debauching their wives. One day a gang of Spaniards had the audacity even to go and carry them off by force from one of their villages. The nation or the tribe of Guahiros rose unanimously to revenge

this outrage: the warriors entered Truxillo, sword in hand, and made great slaughter among the inhabitants. They declared solemnly that they renounced the religion of men so corrupt, for that nothing was sacred to them. All the efforts made by the Spanish missionaries, since that period, to reconcile them to their nation, have proved fruitless; and they have remained implacable enemies to the Spanish name. Every time in which Spain and Great Britain have been at war, the British government has profited of this antipathy, to excite the Guahiros to commit hostilities against the colonists of the province of Maracaybo, which is the cause of its depopulation. The Guahiros, however, are more civilized than the other Indians, their neighbours; they cultivate their land, weave stuffs of cotton and wool for their clothing; they also rear herds of cattle, which form objects of a very considerable trade between them and the English in Jamaica; they receive in payment spirituous liquors, fire-arms, and gun-powder. All their warriors are mounted. They are the true Caribs, possessing their tall stature, manly, haughty and independent character.

Almost every species of European quadruped which has been transported into those countries have become wild, and multiplied excessively in the forests which abound in the necessary means for their subsistence. The horned cattle and the horse have not preserved the beauty of the Spa-



nish oxen and the blood horse, no doubt from the little care that is taken of them ; but the ass has become larger and more handsome.

The horses of Buenos Ayres and Chili, however, rival those of the finest breeds in Europe. The goat is smaller than the European, but its flesh is better, and it yields an abundance of delicious milk. The sheep when taken care of, equals the finest species in Spain. At Margarita I have seen sheep and wethers whose wool was excellent, as is also the meat of the latter. Swine are not so large as in Europe, but are more prolific ; and their fresh meat is more delicate and easy of digestion than that of the European hog.

It seems certain that the dog did not exist here previous to the arrival of Europeans, and it is a remarkable circumstance, that those which inhabit the forests with the savages, who are excessively fond of them, have lost the faculty of barking : they make a plaintive howling like wolves. I have had dogs of the breed of the shepherd's dog and of the mastiff, of which the sire and dam were littered in Europe, and yet they did not bark, but howled. It is true that I then lived almost entirely in the midst of forests. Yet the dogs in the towns and villages bark like the dogs in Europe. The shepherd's dog in this country becomes a very good sporting dog.

In a country so vast as the Caraccas, one so recently civilized, and in which some parts present only the first rudiments of civilization, it must be

expected that there exists a great difference between the manners and customs of the inhabitants of towns and those of the country parts, and even those of the town of Caraccas, for instance, and of the inhabitants of the smaller towns and villages. The luxury of European capitals is found in the town of Caraccas, and a refinement or exaggeration in their politeness, which partakes of the Spanish gravity, and the voluptuous manners of the Creoles. It may be said that their manners are a mixture of those of Paris, and the large towns in Italy; the same taste for dress, sumptuous furniture, ceremonious visits, balls, shows, music, and even for painting, which is in its infancy. The inhabitants of Caraccas and the other towns, however, seldom dine with each other, and are very temperate; but they frequently give collations, in which meat is never introduced, but chocolate, coffee, tea, cakes, sweet-meats and Spanish wines. It is on such occasions that they display their porcelain and fine glass. The women, both old and young, appear at them in all their finery; and the men seem to rival the ladies in the brilliancy of their dresses and gallantry. This is peculiar to the town of Caraccas.

I remarked a very odd custom among the women of Cumana; they wear neither veils nor gloves: thus, with the most agreeable and expressive shapes and countenances, they have a copper colour. While at Cumana, I offered several pairs of gloves for herself and daughters, to a lady, to



whom I was under some obligations. She accepted them, but mentioned that neither she nor her daughters could wear them; that it was not the custom in Cumana; that any young lady seen with gloves and a veil, would be deemed a fantastical coquette, whom no one would marry, and that such fooleries were only fit for the belles and fops of Caraccas! Whilst speaking of the Caraccas fops, I should not omit to mention, that it is not unusual to see the portraits of their mistresses suspended from their necks by gold chains, in about the same manner as a Parisian or London beau wears a glass to assist his sight, injured no doubt by the study of novels and late hours!

I cannot conclude the subject of Indian manners without relating an anecdote, which will give an idea of their modesty. It is known that those of the warm climates of South America, among whom civilization has not made any progress, have no other dress than a small apron, or kind of bandage, to hide their nakedness. A lady of my acquaintance had contracted a kindness for a young Paria Indian woman, who was extremely handsome. We had given her the name of Grace: she was sixteen years old, and had lately been married to a young Indian of twenty-five, who was our sportsman. This lady took a pleasure in teaching her to sew and embroider: we said to her one day, "Grace, you are extremely pretty, speak French well, and are always with us: you ought not, therefore, to live

like the other native women, and we shall give you some clothes. Does not your husband wear trowsers and a shirt?" upon this she consented to be dressed. The lady lost no time in arranging her dress, a ceremony at which I had the honour of assisting. We put on a shift, petticoats, stockings, shoes, and a Madras handkerchief on her head. She looked quite enchanting, and saw herself in the looking-glass with great complacency. Suddenly her husband returned from shooting with three or four Indians, when the whole party burst into a loud fit of laughter at her, and began to joke about her new habiliments; Grace was quite abashed, blushed, wept, and ran to hide herself in the bed-chamber of the lady, where she stript herself of the clothes, went out of the window, and returned naked into the room! A proof that when her husband saw her dressed for the first time, she felt a sensation somewhat similar to that which an European woman might experience who was surprised without her usual drapery.

There remains but little to say on the quadrupeds of this country, which have been almost all described by naturalists, especially the late M. Sonnini, and latterly by M. de Humboldt. Buffon, who had endeavoured to couple the female *cavia paca* with the hare, was not well acquainted with its organization. The *paca* is called *lapo* in the Island of Trinidad and Spanish Guiana. I had remarked the singularity of the several parts of the male, and describ-



ed them in the Island of Trinidad, in 1797, not being aware that M. Sonnini had published observations on the same subject. He says, that the member of the paca is armed with two cartilaginous hooks, like that of the agoutt: I have seen four of them, and his observation is only true in regard to the latter. The paca is a very handsome animal, and easily domesticated: it is also very cleanly. It is rather larger than a hare, has a thick body, and is generally fat, the flesh of it is good food. From its birth to the age of four or six months, the hair, naturally of a deep red, is spotted with white, but after six months those spots disappear.

I am surprised that Sonnini, who lived four years in Guiana, and who asserts he had often hunted there, did not remark that the paca is amphibious; or, at least, that when pursued by the hunters he dives under water, where he remains several minutes without rising to the surface, which I have frequently witnessed; its lungs also resemble those of the otter. M. Sonnini is wrong when he denies that there are several species of pacas, as the physician Laborde wrote to Buffon: I have seen at Trinidad, and San Tome de Angostura, two of those animals perfectly resembling the paca, but much larger and more rugged: they were as large as pointer dogs, and had been caught, one in the Orinoco, and the other on the banks of the Guarapiche. Those animals have a strong inclination for frequenting

water, and do not live long in a domestic state: they feed on fish, and the plants which grow on the borders of the sea and rivers. Their hair is of a deeper red than that of the *paca cavia* of Linnæus, which feeds only on grain and roots.

In this country there are found six species of opossum, vulgarly called manicous, though that to which naturalists have given this name, does not exist in South but North America.

The opossums of Venezuela are, first, the *didelphis* opossum; second, the crab opossum, or *didelphis mursupialis*; third, the marmoset, *didelphis marina*; fourth, the touan, *didelphis brachiura*; fifth, the cayopollin, *didelphis dorsigera*, or philander of Surinam, *didelphis coyollia*; sixth, the yapoch, or little otter of Guiana, of Buffon.

The females of all these opossums, excepting that of the *didelphis murina*, or marmoset, have under the belly a membraneous pouch, where they deposit their young as soon as they are littered; but I am very much surprised at not finding in Buffon and his editors, as well as other writers, any mention of an extraordinary circumstance in the organization of the opossum; which is, that they have the member turned towards the tail.

Trinidad and the provinces of Venezuela have the Agouti, known to all persons who have been at the Antilles. Two species of small deer, the *Cervus Americanus*, and the mangrove stag, which lives in marshy places. They are as common in Trinidad as on the continent, but they do not exist in the Island of Tobago.



A species of Porcupine, called Couandou by the Mar-  
sitan Indians ; this is the *Hystrix prehensilis* of Linnæus.

Two species of lizards, known in the country by the  
names of *Dragon* and *Guana*.

Armadillos, remarkable for their lamellated shell, Genus  
*Dasypus*.

Two species of Ant-bears.

The water-dog, or dog of the woods : A *Didelphis* ;  
The *Didelphis Philander* is common at Trinidad.

The Tiger-cat, or Jaguar of New Spain : Ledru says  
that he never attacks man ; he is wrong, and confounds  
the Tiger-cat with the Jaguar. The same writer is also  
mistaken when he says that there are numerous herds of  
wild swine in the forests of Trinidad : the European hog has  
not become wild at Trinidad as in the Antilles, perhaps be-  
cause it has encountered the Pecary in the woods, vulgarly  
called the *wild American hog*. These wage a cruel war  
against the former. The Pecary must certainly be a differ-  
ent species from swine, as they do not breed with them.  
From various experiments I have seen made, I can assert  
this fact without fear of contradiction. Externally the  
Pecary resembles the swine, but there exist differences in  
their organization as observed by many naturalists.

The external difference, most characteristic of the Pe-  
cary, is a gland on the dorsal spine, between the flesh  
and the skin : it is nearly an inch in diameter ; above  
this gland there is in the skin a little hole of about two or  
three lines diameter, from which exudes a yellowish  
matter which has the smell of musk. Though this animal  
defends itself with a great deal of courage when attacked  
by the hunters, it is easily tamed ; it caresses a man, and  
follows him like a dog : it is very cleanly, and prefers  
elevated situations.

The Mapurito ; when disturbed it emits an insupportable  
stench.

The Musk Rat, or Piloris of the Antilles ; *Mus Pilorides*, Gm.

The Swallower or Crab Rat ; *Ursus cancrivorus*. Cuvier.

The lazy Sloth ; *Bradypus Didactylus*.

*Amphibious Mammiferes.*

The Lamantin or Sea-cow ; *Trichecus manaius Australis*. Gm. ; the Saricorian Otter, and the Brazilian Tortoise.

M. de Humboldt has lately published the natural history of the monkeys of this country, in his *Observations on Zoology and Comparative Anatomy*.

*Birds of the Sea Coast.*

The brown Pelican ; *Pelicanus fuscus*. Gm.

The lesser American Vulture, or the scald-necked Vulture ; it feeds on carrion, flies in flocks, which are generally led by the King Vulture, *Vultur Papa* ; the little American Vulture has been improperly classed among sea fowls : it is true that they are sometimes found on the shore, in search of carrion ; but far greater numbers of them are seen in the interior, and always in flocks.

The King of the Vultures, *Vultur Papa*, is always at the head of flocks of birds commonly called *Ravens*, which pretended raven is the naked breasted vulture, the Uruba (*Vultur aura*) of South America. This bird feeds on carrion. It is remarkable that when the Vultur Papa arrives at the head of his troop, near a carrion, all the vultures make a circle round the banquet, except two or three that place themselves as sentries on trees and trunks of trees. When the king has satisfied his hunger, he flies away, uttering a cry, and goes to place himself as a sentinel. Then all the troop, not excepting the sen-



tries, fall on the carrion, which they devour with great voracity ; after which they repose and sleep, until their chief gives them the signal for departure.

There is in the more elevated situations of the province of Caraccas a bird which partakes of the eagle and the vulture, but it is larger than either. I believe this bird has never been described by any naturalist. Its legs and wings are very long : it is handsome, but extremely rare. It has, as well as I can recollect, a tuft of red feathers on the head, and a stately gait, though somewhat heavy. Its plumage is red, bluish, green and yellow. I never saw more than two of them at Trinidad, one living, the other stuffed, they were brought from the mountains of Cumana. When I was in that province, in 1807, I offered in vain two hundred dollars to procure one of them alive, and four hundred dollars if a male and female were brought to me. The French Creoles settled in the country, have given it the name of King of the Vultures, to distinguish it from the bird they call King of the Ravens, and which naturalists term King of the Vulture, or Vultur Papa.

The first bird that attracted my attention at arriving on the shores of the Gulf of Paria, was the Pelican, the *Pelecanus Fuscus* of naturalists. It often rests its extended wings on the branches or trunks of trees which float on the coast, and when it is seen in that situation at a distance of half a league, and even sometimes at a league, an illusion in optics causes it to be mistaken for a boat under sail. I have at other times thought it was a sentry on the shore, when distant about a quarter of a league.

Those birds feed on fish ; they pass a part of their time in flocks on rocks in the vicinity of the sea, and the remainder in the water. When they see fish they fly at an elevation of about twenty-five or thirty feet, the fish then approach the surface to feed on their excre-

ments, when those voracious birds pounce on them like falcons on their prey. It is a wonderful thing to observe with what dexterity this bird, apparently so unwieldy, swallows a great number of fish; he fills a large bag, which forms a part of his throat, from whence he swallows them when hungry.

The Lancet Bat or Vampire, genus *Philostome*, has been very well described by M. de St. Hilaire, member of the French Institute, and professor of zoology. Buffon, wishing to explain how the Vampires suck blood, without causing to persons asleep that degree of pain which could awaken them, suspects that it is with the tongue, and not the teeth, that they make the incision; and he is right. I think Azzara, otherwise so exact, is incorrect, when he says, they wound in biting, and not in pricking. I have been pierced more than once by these animals whilst sleeping, without feeling the least pain, and their pricking perfectly resembled that of a lancet, which has given rise to their name in Trinidad. I cannot do better than copy the description of this organ given by the learned zoologist St. Hilaire. "Its tongue, whose breadth is to its length as one is to six, is partly flat above and rounded below. In comparison by its length and narrowness, with the tongue of the ant-bear, it also resembles the latter in the faculty the *phyllostomos* have of thrusting it out entirely: its surface is slightly and regularly shagrinéd. There is seen quite near its extremity an organ of suction: it is a cavity of which the center is filled with a raised point, whose borders are formed by eight protuberances of a less elevation than that of the center."\*

The frigate: *Pelecanus aquilus*. Gm.

The common booby: *Pelecanus sula*. Gm.

The diver, or castagneuse: *Colymbus dominicus*. Gm.

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\* It is not improbable that this singular organ may have suggested the ingenious instrument used for cupping.—ED.



The teal: *Anas dominica*. Gm.

The great water-hen of Cayenne: *Fulica Cayennensis*. Gm.

The egret: *Ardea gazetta*. Gm.

The gold plover: *Charadrius Pluvialis*. Gm.

The flamingo: *Phœnicopterus*.

A species of caprimulgus which lives in the caverns of rocks washed by the sea.

*Land Birds.*

The little red ara: *Psittacus uracanga*. Gm.

The great ara. (Macaw.)

The green and red parrot of Cayenne: *Psittacus ochrocephalus*. Gm.

The courow parrot: *Psittacus æstivus*. Gm.

The collared parrot: *Psittacus Alexander*. Daud.

The red banded parrot: *Psittacus Dominicensis*. Daud.

The black headed maipouri parroquet: *Psittacus melanocephalus*. Gm.

The tufted green pecker.

The variegated or Jamaica pecker: *Picus Carolinus*. Lath.

The red-breasted couroucou: *Trogon curucui*. Gm.

The humming bird of Tobago: *Trochilus Tabaci*. Gm.

The green and gold humming bird: *Trochilus viridis-simus*. Gm.

The brown and yellow blackbird: *Turdus aurantius*. Gm.

The toucan, with yellow breast and black beak; another toucan with yellow breast and beak.

The screech owl: *Strix flammea*. Buffon.

The white collared swallow: *Hirundo Cayennensis*. Buffon.

Three species of wild pigeons, called also in the country Paouy. These birds live in pairs, in a state of marriage like the turtle doves: they only lay two eggs for each hatching. They also fly in flocks, and are easily tamed.

The katraca and the parraka are very common in those forests. The first is also as plentiful in the island of Tobago as on the continent, but there are none of them in Trinidad; though frequently taken there they have never bred.

The ring dove.

Three varieties of turtle doves.

The white woodcock.

Three varieties of wild ducks.

The following insects were collected by the naturalists of the expedition commanded by Captain Baudin.

The bull cassida: *Cassida taurus*. Fab.

A variety of the rustic may-bug: *Melolontha rustica*. Fab.

An insect which seems to be the Longimanus of Fabricius; reddish brown, humpy body, coppery and spiny, wings striped with six yellow transverse bands, thighs armed with one hook; cylindrical head, excepting at the base, where the eyes are placed.

The spotted fisher: *Horia maculata*. Fab.

The hemorrhoidal bee: *Apis hemorrhoidalis*. Fab.

The cordiform bee: *Apis cordata*. L.

The dentated bee: *Apis dentata*. L.

The variegated bug: *Lygæus varicolor*. Fab.

The tuberculated ant: *Formica tuberculata*. Encyc.  
41.

The American wasp: *Vespa Americana*. Fab.

The phosphoric fire-fly: *Fulgora phosphorea*. L.

Turtles are rather abundant on the northern coast; they come on shore from April to September.

In the forests, which have such an imposing aspect, there are found the greater part of the trees that embellish



those of the Antilles, the borders of the Orinoco, and Terra Firma.

Botanists also specify in the island of Trinidad,  
The Aspen rush : *Cyperus haspan*. Rottb.

The hexandric commeline : *Commelina hexandra*.  
Aubl.

The yellow leaf ginseng : *Panax chrysophylla*.

*Vitex capitata*. Vahl.

*Justicia secunda*. Vahl.

*Solanum hirtum*. Vahl.

*Cestrum latifolium*. Vahl.

*Allamanda cathartica*. L.

*Macrocnemum coccineum*. Vahl.

*Frælichia paniculata*. Willd.

*Spathodea corymbosa*. Vent.

*Robinia rubiginosa*. Poiret.

*Lupinus villosus*. Willd.

*Glycine picta*. Willd.

*Begonia humilis*. Dry.

*Taberncemontana undulata*. Vahl.

*Tapogomea tomentosa*. Aubl.

*Croton gossypifolium*. Vahl.

*Tragia corniculata*. Vahl.

*Tontalea scandens*. Aubl.

All the trees mentioned in the description of Tobago, are to be found in Trinidad.

The above list contains the result of my observations on those departments of the natural history of Venezuela, and the Island of Trinidad. There are in the last named island many kinds of serpents, some of which are exceedingly large, but not dangerous to man : two species of vipers, but so scarce and timid, that I never heard of any accident from them : it is, however, said that

the serpent called mapipi, is dangerous ; but it must be very rare ; for I who have been much in the woods, never saw it.

There are three species of Boa : I saw one of fifteen to nineteen feet in length, and some have been seen on the continent of forty-five feet long. That which is most remarkable in this gigantic reptile, is the manner in which it devours the fowls and quadrupeds that fall, as it may be said, into his sphere of enchantment. When a hen, pintada, paca, or fawn passes near the Boa, the bird or animal is immediately seized with convulsions ; it ruffles its feathers or bristles its hair, and stands still, without attempting to fly, until this slow and enormous reptile seizes it by the head. The serpent then emits a whitish and viscous slime on the body of its victim, and swallows it slowly at its leisure. If the prey be somewhat large, the monster doubles itself up, contracts its length, and becomes the thicker as it is full. It is then obliged to repose to digest the food, or rather because it is too full to be able to move or crawl. When in this state, a child who was not frightened at its hideous appearance, might kill it with a stick, or cut it in pieces with a sword, as I have seen done by the young Indians and negroes, who would on such occasions appear delighted at vanquishing the monster.

It should be mentioned here, that Dominica is the only island of the Antilles (not including



Trinidad and Tobago) in which the Boa is found, but they are not so large as those of Trinidad and continent: it is also worthy of remark, that the quadrupeds, reptiles, and even the birds of the Island of Trinidad, are smaller than those which belong to the same species on the neighbouring continent.

Innumerable multitudes of toads spread over the country at night, which break its stillness with their croaking. Myriads of fire-flies appear soon after night-fall, and glitter in every direction. Those who write the natural history of this island ought not to forget the industry of the parasol ant, or omit describing the bold habits of its magnificent birds, and their nests suspended from the branches of trees; which probably gave to the American savage the idea of hammocks; a wide field will also be opened for describing the elegant and endless variety of its butterflies.

All those insects and reptiles, some disgusting, others brilliant, concur, each according to its organization, in the great designs of nature. All aid in purifying the atmosphere by absorbing the hydrogen and azotic gas, of which the superabundance would injure the health of the nobler species. The whole coast of Venezuela shines with the white, blue, scarlet, purple and orange enamels of the most brilliant shells. They are the same species I have observed in the islands of Tobago and Trinidad.

*Vegetable World.*

The kind of varied life which my destiny obliged me to lead in the colonies, the civil wars and frequent sea voyages, required by the nature of my business, added to my decided taste for travelling, long and painful sickness, caused more by moral affections and bodily fatigue, than by the climate ; the want of books and communications with learned men, in a country where they are very scarce, and where there are no occupations but the accumulation of wealth, and the enjoyment of physical pleasures : all these causes united, have prevented me from devoting myself to the study of botany, as much as my inclination would lead me. I led, however, rather a sedentary life during the four last years of my residence in the Island of Trinidad, in which I was principally occupied with agriculture. From the commencement of the revolution, I have been connected with two botanists of the first eminence : M. de la Barrere, a distinguished officer of engineers, who had gone to settle in Trinidad, whilst it belonged to Spain, and who still resides there ; and the worthy and learned Mr. Alexander Anderson, founder of the magnificent botanical garden in the Island of Saint Vincent, the richest garden of America and Asia ; where he has assembled all the plants of the equinoxial regions, and even those of the regions vulgarly termed temperate ; such as tea, &c. With these estimable men I made many excursions in the forests



of Trinidad, occupying myself with opening communications and paths, studying the rocks and physical geography of the country, whilst they botanized.

M. de la Barrere, in 1793, and after a year's residence in Trinidad, had discovered two hundred and forty plants that do not exist in the Antilles, which he visited, and of which he has formed three new species, according to the *Genera Plantarum* of our celebrated De Jussieu. It is a great loss to botany that other occupations have withheld him from that science, which he would have enriched with numerous discoveries, if he had been able to attend to it alone. M. de la Barrere has, however, formed a magnificent herbal of the Antilles and the Island of Trinidad, in duplicate. Why does he not send it to Europe? M. de Jussieu, and other learned men, who have not forgotten him, and who preserve their old attachment for him, request, through me, that he will send his duplicates to the learned and generous Mecænas of natural history, Sir Joseph Banks; it will be as usefully placed for the sciences with him, as if it were in the Museum of the Garden of Plants at Paris. The study of the sciences, and the learned societies, have this noble advantage over other human institutions, that instead of the misfortunes of war diminishing the attention and respect which the truly learned of different nations entertain for each other, they even inspire those sentiments with more energy and

vivacity, by the mutual desire and necessity for communicating their ideas, projects and discoveries to each other, in order to accelerate the progress of scientific researches.

The Island of Trinidad presents, in some degree, to the geologist and botanist an abridgment of Guiana, and the countries comprised in the various provinces of Venezuela; such as those situated on one side between a part of the Cordilleras, of the Andes, and other ranges of mountains which proceed from them, and on the sea coast, between the mouth of the river Amazons and that of the Madalena. Plumier, Jaquin, Margraf, Aublet, Sonnini, and other naturalists have given descriptions of the animals and vegetables of this region; and the most learned of modern travellers, Baron de Humboldt, in the relation of his travels, where all is novel, where he has gone through the whole circle of the sciences, from astronomy down to zoophytes, has, during almost five years in which he travelled over different countries of America, extracted more of the secrets of nature, and made more discoveries, I believe, than all the men of science who had visited those regions before him. It is principally to these works I refer those who are desirous of becoming more minutely acquainted with the natural history of the temperate and equatorial climates of America, and particularly of the vegetable world. They will see, that whilst this extraordinary man cal-



culated the movements of the heavenly bodies, observed the physical structure of the globe, noted meteorological observations, dissected birds, quadrupeds, reptiles, fish, studying the remains of Mexican and Peruvian antiquities, languages unknown to the ancient world, the history and manners of the indigenous natives, and made a statistical work on those countries, which alone would suffice for acquiring the highest reputation, they will see, that those prodigious labours which he has executed in such a short space of time, and as if he had merely flown over the surface of the New World, yet left sufficient time to this Leibnitz of his day, to discover and describe about two thousand two hundred new plants!\* And it is a most honourable circumstance for the French language, that this illustrious foreigner has adopted it in publishing his works.

My affairs in the colonies not having permitted me to attend to vegetables, excepting in their connexions with agriculture, arts and commerce, I shall limit myself to speaking of those of which the cultivation is an object of industry with the inhabitants of Trinidad, and the other provinces of Venezuela. It is natural, in the first place, to speak of the sugar cane, which is the principal source of colonial wealth.

The aboriginal inhabitants did not cultivate it

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\* He formed a herbal, during his travels, of six thousand plants.

when Columbus discovered the New World. It even seems to be proved that it did not exist there at that period. The Mexicans had no knowledge of sugar; but they made a syrup from the juice of the agave, a species of pineapple, also from that of the maize stalk, and of the honey of bees. Yet the culture of the sugar cane has been practised from the most remote antiquity in the East Indies and China. From Africa, it passed into Spain, and from the Canary Islands to San Domingo, from whence it was transplanted to the other colonies. According to Oviedo Valdes, the first sugar plantation was established at San Domingo in 1520, and in 1535, there were already thirty of them there. The Canary sugar cane was still exclusively cultivated in the colonies in 1791, under the name of the Creole cane. It was to the discovery of the Islands of Otaheite, in 1759, by the celebrated Bougainville, that we owe the cane now cultivated in the colonies, and to which has been given the name of Otaheite cane. This navigator transported it to the Isle of France, in returning from his voyage round the world: it was cultivated in the botanical garden of that island, from whence it was brought, in 1788, to that of Cayenne, by Mr. Martin, a French botanist, who also sent some of it to Martinico, where it was kept as an object of curiosity in the public garden, at the town of St. Pierre, and in that of a French officer, M. Passerat de la Cha-



pelle. These are facts which have come to my particular knowledge, because I arrived at Martinico at the end of the year 1791. The following is a note supplied to me by a person whose testimony is unexceptionable.\*

“ With respect to the Otaheite canes,” (says M. du Buc,) “ In 1790, there was a tuft or two of them in the Government Gardens at St. Pierre: I believe the plant had come from the botanical garden of Cayenne. A M. de la Chapelle, planter, of Fort Royal, was the first who cultivated it in his grounds, and he praised it excessively; but as his experiments were on a very small scale, and he was known to be in the habit of exaggerating, his assertions were not much credited. However, in the month of June, 1790, when M. de Damas, then at the head of the colonists, went to pacify the town of St. Pierre, after the massacre of the men of colour which took place on the day of Corpus Christi, many of the planters took specimens of this plant from the government garden, and planted it in their own grounds. In the years 1791 and 1792, it increased exceedingly. In 1793, the disturbances and emigration of the planters suspended its progress, but in 1794, it became the more rapid, as each having to plant his plantation anew

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\* M. L. A. Du Buc, deputy from Martinico to the Emperor Napoleon, and son of the celebrated M. Du Buc, formerly intendant of the colonies.

made use of these canes, the superiority of which was confirmed, and they procured it from those who had already a few beds of it. From this moment it was an object of trade : a mule's load of it being sold for two and three dollars. The propagation was so rapid, that in 1798, it might be said, there were none of the old canes remaining in the island.

“ I need not inform you how we manage to accelerate the increase of the Otaheite canes : with a few loads, I planted the tenth of a square bed ; this was cut in four or five months, and each cutting gave as much cane as would plant five or six beds. This second nursery at the end of four or five months more, multiplied six fold in cutting, without prejudice to the first, which still produced : thus you will perceive that three or four squares would be soon planted, and continue so to an indefinite extent.”

For two years past there have been no other canes cultivated in the colonies than those I have described, because they are longer, thicker, and give more juice than the Creole cane. They have a great advantage over the latter, which is, that they may be cut in ten months after they have been planted. The planters in easy circumstances, however, cut them only every fourteen months, and they then give a third more produce than the Creole cane of the same age.

Various persons, and Depons among others, have stated that the above cane degenerates in



America; that the sugar extracted from it is not of such a good quality as that of the Creole cane; that it liquefies partially on the voyage, &c. These are errors now acknowledged by all the colonists. There are in the colonies, as every where else, a set of plodding men, who oppose useful discoveries with all the weight of their prejudices, vanity and ignorance: these men refused to cultivate the Otaheite canes for four or five years; but at present, when they see them yield a third more sugar than the Creole cane, their interest has forced them into its cultivation. It has also the advantage of the refuse giving more fuel, of giving very considerable produce during ten years, in grounds of ordinary fertility, and for fifteen or sixteen years in a fertile soil; whilst it is necessary to replant the Creole cane every two years in middling ground, and every four or five years in the best land: this is an inestimable advantage in a country where labour is so dear.

But what renders this vegetable still more precious, is the flexibility of its organization; or in other words, the property it has of accommodating itself to various temperatures, much more than the Creole cane. It is known that the latter scarcely gives any sugar, and that it is necessary to replant it every year, if it be required to derive any produce from it in countries where Reaumur's thermometer descends, for some months only, below 15°. It is not so with the Otaheite cane. In Louisiana the cultivation of the sugar-cane

had been almost abandoned, previous to the French revolution, because the Creole cane gave scarcely any sugar. The emigrants from San Domingo introduced that of the South Sea island, and although it does not produce as much there as in the Antilles, still its cultivation is much more profitable than that of the Creole cane. Now the climate of Louisiana is not much warmer than that of Provence, Lower Languedoc, and a part of Spain; it is not so hot as in the kingdom of Naples: it is certainly more humid, and the sugar cane requires moisture; but is it not possible, in the south of Europe, to supply the want of atmospheric humidity by irrigations? These are, I may venture to say, reflections worthy of the attention of government. It has been proved that the sugar cane of Otaheite may be advantageously cultivated in the southern countries of Europe which I have mentioned, in every part where the grounds may be watered in dry seasons. I ought not to omit mentioning, that the sugar of Louisiana is not inferior to that of the Antilles: there is no other used in the United States, where it does not cost, when refined, more than sevenpence halfpenny per pound.

In Lower Louisiana it is reckoned that an acre of land gives in an average one thousand pounds of sugar yearly, two hundred and fifty pounds of cotton, two hundred pounds of tobacco, thirty bushels of maize, or twenty bushels of wheat. It is not surprising that such an enormous difference



in the value of the crops has made the planters in Louisiana prefer the cultivation of sugar to all other produce, in that part of their province which is fit for it. It is the same in Mexico and various parts of Venezuela, where previous to the French Revolution this culture was unknown. It is to the ruin of San Domingo, and the misfortunes of our other colonies that it has been introduced there, and even that of coffee, which before the above event had been grown only for domestic use and in very few places. Thus, in a few years, and when peace is re-established, sugar, the most agreeable and the most wholesome\* of vegetable productions, will also become one of those which may be procured on cheaper terms.

Mr. de Cossigny, a landed proprietor in the Isle of France, presented in 1799, to the Agricultural Society of Paris, a memorial, and has since presented others, on the means to be employed for naturalizing in the south of France, the sugar

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\* Those who have been in the colonies know that the negroes belonging to sugar plantations, grow fat during the time of making the sugar, although they then work harder and sleep less than in any other time of the year. It is because they eat a great deal of sugar, and drink plenty of syrup; they are seen to dip their salt fish, meat, and all their food in the hot syrup. The mules and other animals employed on those sugar plantations also fatten in the sugar harvest, for the skimmings of the sugar pans are given to them; and yet they are made to work hard at that time; whereas during the remainder of the year they are allowed to graze at liberty in the savannas.

cane, indigo, and cotton. If the results have not corresponded with the expectations of this learned colonist, so zealous for the interests of his country, it is, I believe, because he was not furnished with the means of making his experiments on a scale sufficiently extensive. Besides, at that period the Otaheite cane was scarcely known in France. I believe it is even still unknown in Europe, that it yields a third more of sugar than the Creole cane, and that it produces abundantly in places and climates where the Creole cane scarcely yields any thing. Chance having enabled me to discover in 1803, at Trinidad, an Otaheite cane on a mountain elevated nearly eighteen hundred feet above the level of the sea, I cut it in pieces and took it home: it was rather more than twelve feet long and two inches in diameter; that is to say, it was as well grown as those that are produced in the warmest parts of the island; although it had sprung up, I know not how, in the middle of mountain weeds. I pressed the juice from it, and it gave me nine ounces of very good raw sugar. I felt convinced, on that occasion, the Creole canes would scarcely grow in this place, or that they would be very stunted, and contain either very little, or very bad sugar; for it is well known in the colonies that this plant does not thrive in cool situations, elevated more than sixteen hundred feet above the sea, where the thermometer seldom rises above 17°, and is generally at 14° or 15° of Reamur.



Some days afterwards I returned to the same mountain, and planted eight Creole and as many South Sea canes; thirteen months afterwards I went to cut them; three of the Creole canes had but seven joints, the others only four or five; they had scarcely eight or nine lines of diameter in their thickest joints. I had their juice boiled, and by dint of ashes and lime, I extracted four ounces of raw sugar from them, of the most inferior quality. The Otaheite canes yielded as much and as good sugar as those which grew in the warmest districts of the island. I kept my experiment secret, as well as some others which I made on tropical productions, as it was my intention not to make them public until my return to France. I then concluded that the South Sea cane is endowed like the Creoles with great flexibility, and that it may be advantageously cultivated in climates less hot than those situated between the tropics.

It was then also that I conceived the idea of communicating to various persons in the United States and France, the scheme of naturalizing in the southern countries of Europe the productions of the tropics, by transporting them, at first to the Azores, or the Canary Islands, where the climate is in the mean between that of the torrid zone and the south of France, Italy and a part of Spain. I was desirous that they should be cultivated in those intermediate regions with care during three or four years, and that from thence

they might be transplanted into Provence. I am convinced that by this means the Otaheite cane may be naturalized with us, and also other productions of the equinoctial regions ; which for our agriculture and commerce would be an advantage on which it is useless for me to dilate, while it must greatly diminish the profits of our rivals.

One day when the late Count de Bougainville was walking about the Garden of Plants at Paris, in 1807, he saw the Otaheite canes in the hot-houses : “these are some of my breed,” said he to M. Thouin, the professor ; “pray give me one to plant in my garden.” The cane was accordingly sent, but his gardener forgot to place it in a hot-house during the winter, nor did the Count even tell him what plant it was. The gardener supposed it to be some curious reed, and merely stuck it in a heap of manure by the side of a wall. The Count walking in his garden in the beginning of the summer of 1808, recognized his Otaheite cane very healthy and large. Convinced by this experiment that it can endure the winter, even in the climate of Paris, he had several joints of it cut and planted, all of which produced very fine tufts of canes.

I shall not enter on the details of the cultivation of this important plant, or on the process of extracting the sugar : a great many treatises have been written on the subject. The best is, undoubtedly, that of M. Duthrone, a physician and planter of St. Domingo : he was, I believe, the first who had sugar pans made of copper, broader



and shallower than the iron caldrons which are chiefly used in the sugar plantations: by their width and shallowness, they save both fuel and time, because the syrup boils and changes sooner into sugar in those boilers than in the former ones which are much deeper. In them the syrup is stirred and skimmed more easily, which diminishes the labour of the refiner. It is also remarked that the sugar made in those pans has a lighter and more agreeable colour, than that which has been boiled in iron. When an iron caldron breaks, or becomes perforated, it is necessary to destroy the masonry of the furnace to replace it with another, which wastes much time, and sometimes spoils several quintals of syrup; but when a copper caldron meets this accident, there is no further trouble than in soldering a patch on it, which can be done in half an hour. These and many other reasons might be cited to induce the Spanish cultivators to abandon the use of iron caldrons as the English planters have both at Jamaica and in almost all their other colonies.

There might be many other improvements made in the cultivation and boiling of sugar. The cogs of the mill wheels, for instance, which are now used frequently break, and it is necessary to unhang them, in order to put new ones in; causing a considerable loss of time and money. In 1803, I proposed to Mr. Robley, of Tobago, to substitute iron ones welded into a rim of the same metal; if the cog should be broken, it would be sufficient to

take off the rim, and introduce a new one ; which might be the work of half an hour, or of an hour at the utmost. When I left my plantation in Trinidad, I intended to have made rims with cogs on this plan.

The tree which produces cocoa, (*theobroma cacao*), is the principal object of cultivation in those of the Spanish colonies which are situated in hot climates, and particularly in the provinces of Venezuela, where it is of a superior quality. "The extreme fertility of the soil," says M. de Humboldt, "and the insalubrity of the air, are in Southern America and Asia, two inseparable circumstances. It is observed that the more the agriculture of a country increases, the more the forests diminish ; and that the more the soil and climate become dry, the less the plantations of cocoa succeed." The observation of M. de Humboldt is strictly true : still it must be said, that there are districts in the provinces of Venezuela, and the island of Trinidad, which though not unhealthy, produce very good crops of cocoa. The vallies of Arragoa in the province of Caraccas, those of Cariaco, Carupano, of Rio Caribe, and the banks of the river Caroni in Spanish Guiana, produce excellent cocoa in abundance : and those countries are not unwholesome, for their inhabitants enjoy good health, and are subject to fewer diseases than aged persons in Europe, or the inhabitants of Barbadoes, Antigua, Sainte Croix,



and some of the Caribbean islands which have no rivers, and are subject to much drought. In the continental regions I am describing, and which are watered by many streams, a great number of navigable rivers, and a multitude of rivulets which would be termed rivers in France, the atmosphere is continually refreshed by the evaporation of those running waters, which at the same time that they invigorate and fertilize vegetation, preserve the inhabitants from certain disorders, to which those residing in countries where the climate is too hot and dry for the European race are subject. The inhabitants of Barbadoes, Tobago, and other islands, where, in some years there is scarcely any rain, are subject to a disease in the alimentary canal, which finishes by paralyzing that organ. The patient loses the faculty of digestion; and sees himself consuming away without a remedy. This disease is incurable when it has made some progress, and the only mode of curing it at its commencement, is to send the patient to a cold climate. The English physicians attribute this malady to the extreme dryness and heat of the climate. Perhaps they might also add to the spices, brandied wines, the rum and other spirituous liquors, which their countrymen often use to such an inordinate excess. The unhealthy parts of the new world are, as every where else, marshy places, and where water has not a sufficiently rapid course: such countries are, it is true, generally

very fertile ; but there are also in those some places which are, at the same time, well watered, fertile, and very healthy.

The cocoa tree is the favourite object of agriculture in the *ci-devant* Spanish colonies. Their neighbours, the English and French colonists, assert that they prefer the cultivation of this plant to that of all others, because it requires scarcely any labour, and that an agreeable nap may be taken under its shade. This consideration may have its weight with many, in the preference which the Spanish colonists give in growing the cocoa tree.

Cocoa was unknown to the inhabitants of the old world, until the discovery of the new. It was the favourite nourishment of the indigenous inhabitants: the cocoa bean served for small money in Mexico, as eggs and cocoa nuts are now passed in Caraccas and Cumana. At first, and after the conquest, the taste for cocoa or chocolate passed from America to Spain, where the opulent would sooner do without bread than chocolate. We owe the introduction of this luxury, as agreeable as it is wholesome, to the monks, who were great admirers of good things; it was they who first brought it into use in France. Could it have been that Linnæus coincided in opinion with them, when he gave it the religious name of *Theobroma*, divine beverage?

The cocoa tree bears fruit in four years after it has been planted, the following year still more,



and increases in fecundity until the ninth or tenth year, when it is in full bearing. Its fruit resembles somewhat the pine tops; but it never grows higher than twelve or fifteen feet. It is useless for me to describe its botanical characteristics, which are well known to all persons conversant in that science. Those who wish to be informed as to the mode of cultivating it, can satisfy their curiosity by reference to the second volume of M. Depons' Travels in the Eastern Part of Terra Firma.

It is impossible to speak of cocoa without thinking of vanilla, the *epidendrum vanilla*, of which the odoriferous fruit is used for giving the former a delicious perfume. This parasitical plant is cultivated in the hot countries of Mexico; but it is collected wild in the provinces of Venezuela and Trinidad, where it would produce considerable gain to the inhabitants, if they gave themselves the trouble of cultivating it. M. de Humboldt has very properly ridiculed the opinion of certain grave and ignorant persons, who pretend that vanilla injures the nerves. It is with this opinion as with that of certain parents, who tell their children that they should not eat too much sugar, because it spoils the teeth! It is known that vanilla is a stimulant equally wholesome and agreeable.

Previous to the French revolution, coffee was not cultivated in the Spanish colonies as an article of commerce. The American and European

Spaniards scarcely ever used that article, which is so deservedly esteemed among us : when they are asked a reason for it, they reply gravely, that it heats the blood : the British and French colonists assert that it is from indolence the Spanish colonists do not grow the coffee tree ; and certainly there is no colonial agriculture that requires so much pains, and such assiduous care from the beginning to the end of the year, as this plant ; which would never have agreed with the slothful habits of the Spanish colonists, as they were thirty years ago. However, the edict of free trade issued by Charles III. at Madrid, in 1778, developed the moral faculties of the colonial Spaniards in all their activity and energy, which until then had laid dormant. It is from that period we may date the efforts they have made for adopting the agriculture of the British, French, and Dutch colonies. Venezuela owes to Don Bartholomeo Blandin the first example of this branch of cultivation, with which the perseverance of a Frenchman enriched Martinico and other parts of America, at the commencement of the last century. In 1784, Blandin devoted his capital and plantations at Chacao, situated at a league from the town of Caraccas, to the cultivation of coffee. The soil on which he formed his plantations is not well adapted for this plant : however, by dint of attention and industry he succeeded in forcing nature to a certain degree. A priest of the Oratory, named Sojo, established coffee plantations in



the neighbourhood of those of M. Blandin. The ruin of St. Domingo, consummated by the insurrection which took place in 1790, leaving a great void in the markets of the old world, was the principal cause that induced the colonists of Venezuela to apply themselves to its cultivation; and from 1793 until the peace of Amiens, there have been a great number of large plantations of coffee formed in various parts of Venezuela, as also in the islands of Porto Rico and Jamaica. It was the French who emigrated from St. Domingo that introduced the culture of it into those islands.

This plant cannot be advantageously cultivated in countries situated beyond twenty-five degrees of latitude; as the climate of the Bermudas, though in  $32^{\circ} 35'$  is too cold for it during the winter. For the same reason, it is wrong to persist in cultivating it in those parts of Venezuela, which by their elevation above the sea, have a temperature of  $12^{\circ}$  or  $10^{\circ}$  of Reaumur's thermometer: that which agrees best with the coffee tree, seldom rises above  $20^{\circ}$ , and never descends below  $10^{\circ}$ . Under this degree of heat, it will cease to produce; which is the reason why it is useless to think of introducing it even into the warmest parts of Europe. This plant thrives best in a mild and rather moist temperature: the excessive heat of the sun does not agree with it, and it flourishes in the vicinity of forests and rivulets. In St. Domingo, Martinico and Guada-

loupe, it is only cultivated on the hills; but experience has proved in Venezuela, Trinidad, Demerara, Berbice and Essequibo, that it thrives equally well in the plains, when placed in a proper soil.

Cold and hard argillaceous earths, and also the sandy clay that lies on a bed of marl, are not fit for coffee plantations; for at the end of twelve or fifteen years the tree would no longer produce, and would perish on such soils. It is best placed in black deep arable ground which retains the humidity well. If there be a quantity of small stones in such ground, the tree becomes still more productive. In Venezuela, the proper mode of cultivating coffee was not well known in 1807: the above is the manner adopted by the most intelligent French planters.

The plantations of coffee trees succeeded only in places where the woods have been felled: the grounds called savannas in those countries (natural meadows), or those which have been planted with sugar, cotton, or indigo, are not fit for the coffee tree, as they have been too much dried by the sun.

Formerly coffee trees were planted too closely in the French colonies at the distance of only four feet, so that their branches intermingled and injured each other. The influence of light and air on vegetation was not well understood then. Mr. Bruley, of St. Domingo, has written a sensible treatise on their cultivation, of which I shall give an extract in this place.



“To procure the coffee plant, they went under the whole trees, and dug up the young plants produced by the fall of the ripe fruit, which were transported from one plantation to another: after having cut off a part of their roots, they were placed in holes dug purposely for them. This method is defective; a great part of the plants obtained in such a manner, independently of the mal-conformation that might have occurred in them, under the old coffee tree, had, besides, the defect of never having been exposed to the sun's rays; therefore the planter had not a certainty of success in their growth. It was frequently found that planters had to renew their plantations for several successive years, before they became regular.

“I avoided this inconvenience by a practice which many planters have adopted since. I sowed at a distance of six inches, in regular rows, and in ground prepared for that purpose, certain grains of coffee: this became a nursery, which I watered and took great care of; and from thence I took the young coffee plants necessary for making my plantations. When it was necessary to remove them from the nursery, care was taken to moisten the earth well, and then with a single cut of the spade, the young coffee tree was raised, with the mass of clay that surrounded its roots.

“It may be easily imagined that the coffee plants thus transplanted from the nursery to the holes destined to receive them, suffered no alter-

ation or hindrance in their vegetation, and consequently the plantations were regular. Very few plants required to be replaced; none were defective in their structure; while all were accustomed to a scorching sun: I mitigated its effects on the earth in which those young trees were planted, by placing heaps of pebbles close to them, which preserved the moisture of the ground even in the driest time of the year. All those coffee trees had the advantage of being more flourishing, stronger, and bearing sooner than those of my neighbours, planted at the same time, according to the old method. I am assured that these plantations, though neglected like all those of St. Domingo, are still fine."

I have already said that the coffee trees were planted too closely together in the French colonies: they were placed at four feet asunder, and in all kinds of ground. This circumstance was the cause that good crops were obtained only in poor land. It is now understood that they should be planted at distances of seven or eight feet in a good soil. They are also planted in triangle or in quincunx, by which a sixth part of the ground is saved. The deeper the vegetative mould is, the deeper the holes should be dug; but if the good soil be shallow, care must be taken that the holes be not too deep, because the plant will die when the roots reach the volcanic ashes or tufa.



Coffee trees produce but little unless their growth be impeded by cutting: they are cut at two feet and a half on middling soils, and at four and a half or five feet on very fertile grounds. This plant produces some fruit in two years after it has been planted: it produces still more in the third year; in seven years it is in full bearing, and lives to seventy and eighty years, when in a proper soil and well cultivated. I shall not enter into further details on its cultivation, which would be no novelty to the inhabitants of our colonies, and totally unnecessary to an European reader. There is, however, in what I have said, and in that which I have quoted from M. Bruly, information which will not be useless to many planters in the Spanish colonies where this subject is not yet well understood. I also wish to recommend them to plant their nurseries of coffee plants under the shade of bananas, and to transplant them, as they practise with their cocoa trees, to the shade of the erythrina, which they call *la madre del cacao*, mother of cocoa. I shall say nothing of the plants that produce cotton, arnotto, indigo, which are all cultivated in Venezuela, and yield superior qualities there.

They have in their exportable commodities, a grain of two lobes, which the people of the country call puchery, or pichurim, and to which the French Creoles have given the name of the Orinoco nutmeg, because it has an aromatic odour very similar to that of the oriental nutmeg.

I have never been able to see the tree that produces this grain, which grows near the banks of the Rio Negro, and is sold at a very low price in the country. It belongs to a species of laurel.

Mr. Richard told me he had found one in French Guiana, the fruit of which, as described by him, appeared not to differ from that used in commerce. Why do not the inhabitants of Venezuela cultivate it at home? Since the flavour of its fruit is such an agreeable aromatic when wild, it is presumed that it would acquire a more superior quality if domesticated. I have found that a decoction of it mixed with sugar and magnesia, is a powerful remedy in the disease known by the name of dry cholic, which makes such havoc among the negroes, and even sometimes among the whites in the Antilles. Combined with sugar and a small quantity of opium, it is an excellent remedy for tenesmus and dysentery. The Swedish and Danish physicians tell wonderful things of it.\*

One day when I was going from my plantation, situated on the north side of Trinidad, to Port Spain, accompanied by M. de la Barrere, and when exhausted with fatigue, sickness, and vexation, I rested near a cascade which rushes from the mountain of Las Cuevas, my indefatigable companion was collecting plants above me; I heard him

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\* This is a very common spice in the Brazils and Portugal, where it is called Noz Nougada, and sold very cheap.—ED.



suddenly exclaim, "what do I see! is that a yew tree? pray come and look at it. I have traversed," said M. de la Barrere, "the woods and mountains of this island a hundred times, and never met with a tree that had the appearance of this one:" it was in full bloom.

We had some Indians with us, who climbed like squirrels: one was sent up to gather some of the fruit and blossoms: he soon threw down plenty of them. The berry of this tree is larger than that of the yew, *Taxus baccata*, and of a taste at once rough and sweet; its flowers do not differ from those of the yew *baccata*, otherwise than in being larger and purplish; but its leaves narrow and thick, are rather lancet shaped than blunt, which is the reason that M. de Jussieu considers it to be a *Podocarpus*, or species approaching the yew. The yew, or *Podocarpus* of Las Cuevas, is taller and thicker than that of Europe: we saw one of about sixty feet high, and four or five others appeared to be from forty to fifty feet in height. The thermometer, in the shade, is generally between sixteen and eighteen degrees on the mountain of Las Cuevas: there is scarcely sufficient coolness there to keep alive some arborescent fern, which have neither the height nor thickness of those which grow in Guadaloupe on the tops and sides of the Souffriere, Matouba, and Mont d'Or. Still it is an interesting circumstance for the geography of plants, to see a yew, or a species so nearly

allied to it, which exists in ten degrees of latitude, at about two thousand feet only above the level of the sea.

This phenomenon can only be explained by the numerous rivulets which meander in the range of Las Cuevas, and by the breezes of the north wind that come from the direction of North America, and which, from the month of November to the beginning of April, produce such a coolness in the more elevated parts of this island, that it is not uncommon for Reaumur's thermometer to descend to  $12^{\circ}$ , an hour after the sun's setting: I have seen it at  $11^{\circ}$  half an hour before sun-rise.

While surveying the surrounding scenery, I recollected an expression made to me six years before, by the learned Walker\*, when I spoke to him of the forests of South America: "Oh! what a fine sermon those forests are!" said he. On this spot all conduced to grave and melancholy meditation. From the point on which we stood, I saw five cascades precipitating their waters over each other.

To the east, I saw and heard the sea rushing with fury into the caverns of Las Cuevas; it was calm to the west, and in the Gulf of Paria: what a true emblem of human life! It is in this vast silence of the forests, this calm of nature,

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\* Professor of natural history at Edinburgh.



that the virtuous man whose mind is wounded by persecution and misfortune, should go to meditate and soothe his soul. It is there, that in the innocent society of the vegetable world, and by observing its mysterious laws, he may contemplate on one summit, bananas, balisiers, mahogany, cedar, the fern, and yew, which, though natives of different sites and temperatures, vegetate on the same point of our planet, without hot houses, or other stimulus from human aid, whilst man often exists only to torment his fellow creature!

*Geological Observations.*

The great range of mountains in Guiana and Venezuela, which runs east and west, is composed of gneiss and micaceous schistus, in which are found chrystals of quartz. The micaceous schistus (*glimmerschiefer* of Werner) makes a transition sometimes into talcous schistus, and the decomposition of this latter substance gives a greasy appearance to the soil. There is also found in the ridge of mountains on the coast, between Punta de Piedra and Guiria, near Cape de Paria, at a league from the sea, a blueish calcareous stone, similar to that which M. de Humboldt designates under the term of the Alpine calcareous stone (*alpenkalkstein.*) This rock is rather hard, and veined with white calcareous carbonate chrystallized: it rests on coagulated

clay with pebbles of the primitive rocks. I found near Carupano, outside the Gulf of Paria, and in the vallies of the coast mountains, lamellated gypsum near the beds of rivers, and in places they had abandoned.

On leaving the foot of those mountains and the mouth of the Orinoco, to coast the sea shore to the river of Amazons, there seems to be no other substance than a vegetative argillaceous earth, deep and fertile, without rocks or pebbles. All the coasts of this country, from the mouth of the Orinoco, to the Lake of Maracaybo, are primitive. The part of that country which is low, and almost every where on the same level, has been formed evidently by the ruins of mountains, and the sediment of the waters of the Orinoco, which are thrown back on the coast by the force of the waves and currents. Those alluvial and marshy earths are every day more and more covered with mangroves (*rhizophora mangle*,) which thrive in the sea, or on its shores, in those climates. It is evident that in this part of the world, the land encroaches continually on the sea, and thus marine shells are found at some distance from the coast, and in places that the sea has recently abandoned. Such is the coast south-west of the Island of Trinidad, and that situated towards the right bank of the Orinoco.

Near the mouths of the Orinoco there are only grounds inundated and covered with mangroves,



and other trees natural to the sea shore, and not a single rock in that multitude of islets covered with various kinds of palms, and inhabited by the Guaraouns. But on the borders of the sea, between the Guarapiche and the Orinoco, there are found fragments of quartz, rounded quartzose pebbles, and shingle of rocks composed of various colours, such as green, yellow, red, blue, &c. The magnetic needle indicates the presence of iron in almost all those pebbles and rocks.

In short, the Amazons, the rivers of Cayenne and Surinam, the Demarara, Essequibo, and all the other streams that discharge themselves on this coast, enable it to advance continually on the sea, and imperceptibly augment the territory of Trinidad; so that it may be predicted that the Gulf of Paria will some day be no more than a channel through which the waters of the Orinoco and Guarapiche will be conveyed to the ocean. The course of the currents which continually form and increase this coast, is from south-east to north-west, from the mouth of the Amazons to beyond Cape de Paria.

This country has been almost every where convulsed by volcanoes; but the volcanic effects there do not resemble those of Europe, owing to the difference of geological constitution. Here is found gypsum, which abounds in sulphur; elsewhere pyrites mingled with all kinds of rocks, even with the granitic rocks; bituminous muriatic argile, petroleum or asphaltum. The

rains of sea water which frequently fall on this soil heated by a burning sun, and which are decomposed in it, nourish the volcanoes, that send forth eruptions of argillaceous mud, and sulphurated hydrogen.

The gold mines in this country are so unproductive that they have been abandoned. There are no other mines now worked there, than those of copper at San Felipe de Aroa. I have never heard, and M. de Humboldt has no knowledge of tin mines in Venezuela, which a public paper mentioned some time ago.



## CHAP. IV.

Industry and Commerce of the *ci-devant* Spanish Colonies compared with those of England, France, Holland, &c.—Lord Chatham's opinion of Colonial Manufactures.—Impolicy of encouraging them.—Most advisable System for Governments to pursue.—Barbarous Policy of the Spanish Cabinet with regard to the Colonies.—Juice of the Agave.—Absurd and oppressive Mode of Taxation.—Reflections.—Guipuscoa Company.—Edict of Free Trade.—Prohibitions of the Spanish Government.—Remarks on the Work of M. Depons.—Contraband Trade of English Merchants.—Facts and Observations relative thereto.—Panegyric on the Custom House, and Revenue Laws of Great Britain.—Remarks on the Colonial System of France, and Consequences of the prohibitory Regulations of Spain.—List of various Duties, Imposts, &c.—Privileges accorded to French Settlers in the Spanish Colonies by the Family Compact.—Annual Amount of Exports from Venezuela.—Concluding Remarks.

WHILST the British, French and Dutch colonies in America had arrived at the highest degree of prosperity which each of them could attain, relatively to the degree of prosperity enjoyed by their respective parent states, the Spanish colonies, which are so superior to them in extent and beauty, in the salubrity and variety of their climates, and by all the riches which are lavished there in the three great departments of natural history, languished, in a state of misery and stagnation, bordering on the barbarity in which the

semi-civilized nations of Asia and Africa are still plunged. The original cause of this state of things is found in the exclusive system of commercial companies, to which they had long been sacrificed; and since the abolition of those companies, in the impossibility Spain found herself with the absurd laws which oppressed her commerce, to export the raw materials of her colonies, or manufacture them, at the same time that she prohibited their being manufactured by the colonists at home, or to sell them in their crude state to the neighbouring nations.

All nations have had more or less of this jealousy; but other states have possessed the necessary means or industry for supplying the wants of their colonies. Previous to the great revolution which liberated North America, Lord Chatham declared in Parliament, that it ought to be prohibited to the colonists, under the most severe penalties, to spin a single thread or forge a nail. By this hyperbolic expression he meant to prove, that commerce and navigation would experience a great check, if the Americans were permitted to work their raw materials; which a great number of English vessels were employed in bringing from those colonies, the profits of which maintained a multitude of seamen, the nursery of the navy, at the same time that they caused their manufacturing towns to flourish, whose wealth was disseminated



by all the channels of industry among every class of citizens.

And it must be confessed that the chief part of the colonies have been, or are still in a state in which it would be injurious to subtract a portion of their population, to be employed in the refinements of manufacturing industry ; because those very objects may be furnished to them on much better terms from the East Indies and Europe ; countries where, on account of their great population, workmanship is at a very low price. Thus it was seen, about thirty years ago, at Martinico, that M. du Buc, a man of otherwise good sense and considerable talents, lost in a short time more than two millions of francs (eighty thousand pounds), by having attempted to establish sugar refineries in that island. Since the Americans of the United States have become an independent people, they have had the wisdom to avoid diverting their population from agriculture to manufactures : they find it more profitable to carry the raw produce of their soil to Europe and to India in their own vessels ; by which their merchants and mariners gain considerable freight ; which bring home to them in exchange the manufactured merchandizes of the old world, and which do not cost them so dear as if they had been wrought among themselves, notwithstanding the duties established by congress on all kinds of merchandize imported from foreign nations,

duties which form nearly nine tenths of the revenue of this economical government.\*

It should not be concluded from the above, that certain branches of industry ought to be interdicted to the colonists: such prohibitions are calculated only to render governments odious. A wise administration leaves trade to find its own level, and does not imitate the ancient Spanish ministry, who, although their nation had neither the means nor industry to consume, nor to transport to other countries the productions of those beautiful and immense colonies, still less to provide for their wants, yet would not permit them to establish manufactories there, or to procure a great number of the most necessary and agreeable objects sought for by wealthy people from their neighbours; such as stuffs, furniture, jewels, liquors of India and Europe, nor even the utensils for agriculture and the mechanical arts. All those conveniences have long been interdicted to the inhabitants of the Spanish colonies, who had the vexation and shame to see themselves wretched, ragged, and almost as naked as savages, whilst their neighbours, the English, French, Dutch,

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\* This assertion of the author is not borne out by late communications, from which it appears that both the American people and government have seriously turned their attention to the establishment of manufactories, which, according to the old system of transatlantic bombast, are to rival those of Europe, particularly England, in the course of a very short period, if they do not already realize that pleasing dream.—ED.



and even the Portuguese, though in a country far less abundant in natural and metallic riches, lived in the midst of comforts, enjoyments, and luxury.

Volumes might be filled in recounting the absurd acts of the ancient Spanish government, which had for their object those fine but unfortunate colonies. It is known that all the productions of Europe and Asia grow admirably well in Mexico, Peru and Caraccas, according as the ground is elevated above the sea, or approximating to it. The inhabitants of those countries have been able and willing to cultivate the productions of Europe, and from the commencement of the last century, the olive and vine. The government of the mother country put obstacles in the way of such cultivation, even so far as to prohibit it. The Peruvians and Mexicans paid very little attention to those prohibitions, and the government not feeling itself sufficiently strong to enforce such iniquitous measures, shut its eyes on their disobedience. However, in 1802, on the representations of the merchants of Cadiz, who informed His Catholic Majesty that the cultivation of the vine and olive tree in Mexico, injured the interests of his good city of Cadiz, an order was sent to the viceroy, Don Joseph de Yturrigaray, to cause all the vines and olive trees there to be extirpated. That prudent governor took upon himself to avoid putting such a barbarous order into execution, the consequences

of which might have led to the immediate independence of Mexico. The rapacity of a company of traders knows neither shame nor limits, when they acquire too much influence with a government, as may be seen in the conduct of the British and Dutch East India Companies.

The reader has just seen that the merchants of Cadiz would have caused the destruction of the vine and olive in America; but there is also another indigenous plant, the juice of which fermented, has been the favourite beverage of the Mexicans from the earliest antiquity. The maguay, or agave, a species of the pine-apple, produces a kind of wine called pulque. The said Cadiz traders requested of the government to order the destruction of all the plantations of it; and this order, which is not unique of the kind in the annals of commercial tyranny, was sent, it is asserted, to the viceroy, Count de Revillagigedo, in 1791.\* It might be said that at the breaking out of the French revolution, a kind of vertigo infested the councils of Europe. The Count of Revillagigedo not only took care not to put such an order into execution, but he even concealed it from the officers of the government. It was this viceroy who rendered such great services to the

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\* All those who have studied history, from the time of the Tyrians and Carthaginians, to our own days, need not be told that no tyranny ever equalled that of trading governments towards foreign countries subject to their domination.



sciences, arts, agriculture and navigation, and who, I believe, was the first that attempted to compose a statistical account of Mexico; a work which it was reserved for M. de Humboldt to complete, with that superiority of genius which characterizes all his productions.

The fermented juice of the agave is thus for the Mexicans, that which wine is for the people of the south, and cider or beer for those of the north of Europe. They extract from this wine a spirit that they call mexical, or aqua ardiente de maguey. This spirit was prohibited for a long time, because it injured the trade in Spanish brandies. But in those distant countries, they eluded such a tyrannical order, and the government at length permitted the inhabitants of the internal provinces, and those of Tuspan, a district in the intendency of Gaudalaxara, to sell their pulque brandy publicly, merely imposing a slight duty on it. From that time the complaints ceased, and the people paid the tax without murmuring. The cultivation of the maguey, says M. de Humboldt, is become such an important object for the exchequer, that the duties of entry paid in the three towns of Mexico, Puebla and Toluca (the first of those towns had, in 1808, 140,000, the second 68,000, and the third 50,000 inhabitants,) amounted in 1793, to the sum of 817,739 dollars; the expences of collecting it then were 56,608 dollars; so that the government derived from those three towns only, from

from the juice of the agave, a net profit of 761,131 dollars. M. de Humboldt adds that the immoderate desire of augmenting the royal revenues latterly, induced them to overburthen the manufactory of pulque in a vexatious and inconsiderate manner; and that if the government did not change the system in this respect, it may be expected that this branch of cultivation, one of the most ancient and lucrative, will gradually decline, in spite of the decided predilection of the Mexicans for the maguey wine.

The blind and impolitic mode in which taxes were imposed by the Spanish government, proves that it was ignorant of the first elements of financial legislation; the great art of which is to extend the imposts on the greatest possible number of objects, and to render them light on each object that can best support them: their produce is then immense, it arrives continually at the treasury, and neither alarms nor oppresses any one; they are not exposed to evasion, and always easy of collection. Thus received, the direct or indirect taxes enrich the state, provided they do not impede industry. But what the ancient Spanish government could not comprehend, though a very obvious case, was that the more it augmented the rates of imposts, the less productive they were found to be. When it is only the superfluous, that is affected by the duties, two and two make four for a long time in finance as in arithmetic; but when the exaction is made



too deeply, the consumption, which decreases, limits the indirect impost; labour, which also decreases as much, abridges the direct impost; so that in a short time the old axiom so often referred to in fiscal concerns, no longer holds good.\*

Peru and the provinces on the Pacific Ocean, have not been so ill-treated by the Spanish laws, owing to the great distance of those provinces, which must be reached by doubling Cape Horn, or the immense voyage by the East Indies. It was therefore necessary to grant them permission to sow corn, and other articles for their subsistence, and also to plant vines and olives. Not being able to send the stuffs requisite for clothing them, or other instruments and utensils necessary for civilized man so far, they have been permitted for a long time past, to manufacture those articles at home.

Thus, though the provinces of Mexico, New Granada, Caraccas, the Islands of Cuba, Porto Rico, Trinidad, and the Spanish part of St. Domingo, all those colonies, in fact, whose shores are washed by the northern ocean, though they are much better situated than Peru for trading

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\* In 1794, Mr. Pitt doubled the duties on Portugal wines. In one year the receipt diminished £100,000, the duty was re-established on the former scale, and the receipt augmented to the amount that it had previously been.†

† What a lesson for the present Chancellor of the Exchequer! and how truly he stands in need of it, many of his late taxes prove!—ED.

with Europe, have for a long time presented only a picture of poverty and decrepitude, united to that of the very infancy of social order. In those countries the proprietors of mines alone were wealthy; and the rage for discovering them, which can only be compared to the passion for gaming, was daily the cause of ruining a great number of families, and a source of immorality peculiar to those countries. The more the Spanish government encouraged this species of gaming, the more it impeded agriculture and colonial industry. It seemed as if all that was not mines, interested it very little; that it desired to have no more subjects in the new world than were necessary for working them; and that above all, it feared that they would become too rich and too well informed; for all the colonial institutions tend to preserve them in ignorance and misery.

Still, after having drawn this dismal picture of the Spanish colonies, it is but proper to say, that in spite of the unjust and barbarous orders deceitfully obtained from the sovereigns of the last dynasty, by insatiable traders, and corrupt ministers, those kings have done more for the prosperity of their colonies, than Charles V. and his descendants; witness the treaty by which that monarch, after having depopulated his states, and exhausted his finances, sold, in 1528, the country of Venezuela to the Wel-sers, who made that fine country a scene of



pillage, devastation, and all the crimes which exclusive commercial companies alone can invent, when they are permitted to exercise sovereign authority. The descendants of Charles V. constantly sacrificed the interests of Spain to those of their German possessions, or to other political considerations, as may be seen in the ruinous treaties made with the Hanse Towns in 1647; with Holland, in 1648; and with England in 1667. And while the Spanish commerce was abandoned to the neighbouring nations, during the fifteenth, sixteenth, and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries, from the abolition of the privilege of the Welsers, which took place in 1547, the port of Seville alone had for a long time, the privilege of trading with the colonies. This privilege passed to Cadiz at the commencement of the seventeenth century, and so continued exclusively until 1728, when the Guipuscoa Company was established.

The charter of concession declared that the province of Guipuscoa was authorized to form a commercial company, which should have its agents at Cadiz, the port from whence its vessels should sail, and to which they should return to discharge their homeward bound cargoes. The number of ships was limited to two, and the countries to which they were permitted to trade, were those which composed the captain generalship of Caraccas. Those vessels, armed with from forty to fifty guns, were authorized to cruize

between the great mouth of the Orinoco and that of the Rio de la Hache, from the time they discharged their cargoes, until their departure for Europe, in order to capture interlopers. In 1734, the company obtained new privileges, the king having declared that shares might be held in it, directly or indirectly, without derogating from nobility, and without loss of honour, rank, or reputation. It is certainly not astonishing that commerce, the vivifying principle of states, should languish, and that ignorance and barbarity should triumph in a country, and among a people where such a declaration was necessary. Here a new era begins; more liberal principles begin to influence the cabinet of Madrid: the company obtained by that charter permission to arm as many vessels as it thought proper, and to equip them in the ports of San Sebastian and Passage; but the returns were to be made to the port of Cadiz.

The first operations of the company were brilliant, and the colonists had no cause to complain of them; but by the charters dated in 1742 and 1752, it so extended and abused its privileges, that the complaints of the colonists forced the government to suppress it by the famous edict of the 12th of October, 1778, known by the name of that of free trade.

At the above period, North America had given a great lesson to parent states: it would seem that this was not totally lost to the court of Madrid; and



the monopolizing merchants of Cadiz ought to have been convinced, that their commerce increased instead of having diminished, according as the government relaxed the chains in which the agriculture and industry of the colonies languished.

This order of things is, no doubt, by far preferable to that which existed before ; but still this last system adopted by the Spanish government was as much behind that which existed in the French colonies, as the administration in the latter was inferior to the excellent regulations by which the British colonies in the West Indies were governed.

If Spain, instead of occupying herself almost exclusively with metals, when she made the conquest of America, and during the two centuries which succeeded it, had excited the industry of her subjects to colonial agriculture, that is to say, the cultivation of sugar, coffee, cocoa, cotton, indigo, cochineal, and all the other productions so valuable in the European markets, she would have rendered Europe a tributary of her commerce.

But to arrive at that object, it would have been necessary to have attracted the subjects of foreign states to settle in her colonies. Far from adopting such a wise measure, she would not, at first, permit any other nation to establish itself in America. Posterity will scarcely believe that it is on a papal bull that this power founds its rights to that part of the world. The other European

nations which wished to make establishments there after the Spaniards, had to defend themselves from them still more than from the Indians. This absurd and unjust conduct gave birth to the famous buccaneers, a set of heroical robbers who long retarded the progress of the Spanish colonies.

Let us now glance at the ancient colonial system of Spain and her custom-house regulations. M. Depons compares the Spanish colonial system to that which formerly existed in the French colonies; he eulogizes both, and according to him the latter was a master-piece of human wisdom.

In truth, it cannot be conceived from whence M. Depons has derived his documents. The mode of praising, is at least as dangerous as that of blaming every thing; and it appears that M. Depons, when he undertook his work, was determined to find all that had been done by the ancient Spanish government, excellent as well as that which had been effected by the ancient French government. I believe that he might, without failing in the gratitude which he owed to the former government, draw a very striking picture of the imperfections and vices of the administration of the Spanish colonies. He says, for instance, in the second volume, (see *Statistics of Caraccas*,) that the fiscal theory of local imposts introduced into America, serves by its produce to maintain an infinite number of revenue officers employed by the Spanish government; places,



he says, that are solicited with urgency, and occupied with dignity. Surely this must be intended as a satire; for I cannot comprehend what that dignity can be in all those custom-house officers or Spanish gabelous, who were always ready to hold out their hands to the first smuggler who has occasion to bribe them! The Spanish colonies comprised in the captain generalship of Caraccas, would have remained much longer in their infancy, if they had not had for neighbours the Dutch of Curaçoa, who have made great advances to them since 1634, and received in payment hides, cotton, and cocoa. Now it was the vicious system of the Spanish custom-house laws, that gave such an advantage to strangers over their own subjects, as I shall explain; though M. Depons says, that it was the ill-conceived system of the French custom-house laws, previous to the revolution, which gave such great advantages to the English in the trade of colonial produce, especially those adapted for manufactories. Whatever may be said by the defenders of those absurd systems, the facts speak more clearly than arguments; for, to use the expression of a celebrated statesman in political economy, facts become the very proofs of science, after having been its materials.\*

Why then, if the commercial laws and custom-

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\* M. de Talleyrand's Treatise on the Commercial Relations of North America.

house regulations of France and Spain were more ably arranged than those of the English and Dutch, as M. Depons asserts, could those nations sell their colonial produce at as low prices as ours, in the European markets, though our colonies were larger and more fertile than theirs? Why could they sell our own raw colonial produce there, and even the manufactured, in certain circumstances cheaper? The contraband trade of the Virgin Islands, small and barren colonies of the English, will explain this fact in the course of the present chapter.

To return to the Spanish colonies: from the abolition of the Guipuscoa Company, which took place in 1780, the port of Cadiz enjoyed the privilege of trading with Spanish America until 1785; but that liberty has been since extended to the ports of Sevilla, Malaga, Almeria, Alicant, Carthagená, Valencia, Barcelona, Alfagues, Tortosa, Santandero, Gijon, Vigo and Majorca; as also to those of Santa Cruz, Palma, and Santa Cruz in Teneriffe in the Canary Islands. Still it was prohibited to those islands to trade with America in any other articles than those of their own soil. It is remarkable that this prohibition, as well as their position, were the causes of there being more contraband trade carried on there than elsewhere: several rich commercial English houses were engaged in that trade under the mask of the Irish Catholics. It happened in those islands, as it occurs every where, when a government establishes regulations too severe, without hav-



ing the means of making them respected ; that of their being only an additional incitement to fraud : in short, the Spanish governors and administrators having much more to gain by tolerating smuggling than by suppressing it, divided the profits of that trade with the agents of the British commercial houses established in those islands. Wise regulations, which instead of embarrassing and discouraging national commerce, might favour and protect it, could alone restrain the contraband trade. It was the fluctuations still more than the rigour of the Spanish and French custom-house laws, which gave to the English such great advantages over their competitors.

Many causes contributed to their success, and they owed much of it, more to the negligence and thoughtlessness of the ancient European governments, and the corruption of some of their ministers, than to the ability of their manufacturers. There must, however, be this justice done to the English, that with the exception of the Dutch, they possess and know better than any other nation in Europe, the principles of commercial companies; and great companies, as well as great commercial houses, will always have incalculable advantages over individual merchants, who can employ only moderate capitals : the English have also better known and appreciated the value and distribution of time and labour, than any other European nation ; which caused them to invent so many admirably useful machines ; and adopt various other measures to facilitate commerce.

But even though I should be accused of repetition, I can prove, by many examples, that it is to their revenue laws, the good regulation of their custom-houses, to their bounties and drawbacks, that they principally owe the advantage of being able to sell at a lower price than other nations in the European markets.

The British Antilles had become the staple of the French and Spanish colonies, which, no doubt, derived some advantages from it; but to the great detriment of French commerce, and, consequently, of French agriculture and manufactures. By a proclamation of the 1st November, 1766, the King of Great Britain opened, for the transit of merchandize, the Ports of Prince Rupert and Roseau in the Island of Dominica, and those of Kingston, Savanna la Mar, Montego Bay, and Santa Lucia in the Island of Jamaica. Various acts or proclamations, dated in 1774 and 1775, have extended or modified those privileges according to circumstances; subsequent proclamations by the British Government, have granted the same favour to the Islands of Grenada, Providence, and in 1797, to that of Trinidad.

Those acts, or proclamations, are simply invitations which the king of Great Britain addresses to merchants in the French and Spanish colonies to carry on contraband trade with his subjects. I shall first mention the Virgin Islands, as an instance of the immense trade of that nature, which England maintained there with some of



the Spanish colonies, and with the French colonies of the Lesser Antilles. In 1788, Great Britain exported from those barren islets, to the amount of £1,450,000 of colonial produce, which immense value she paid for in her manufactures; for this opulent nation scarcely ever uses gold or silver in her commerce, and never takes specie into her colonies, from whence, if she extracts it, it is in Spanish or Portuguese money.

The Virgin Islands are a chain of islets almost sterile, situated between St. Kitt's and Porto Rico, and which with difficulty maintain fifteen hundred whites or free people of colour, and nine thousand negroes occupied in the cultivation of cotton, working three or four miserable sugar plantations, and in growing the provisions of the country for their subsistence. From the particular knowledge I have of those little islands, I do not hesitate to assert, that the value of their annual natural exports or productions of their soil, scarcely amounts to £42,000; from whence it results that the contraband trade which they carried on in 1788, with Martinico, Gaudaloupe, Mariegalante, and the Spanish Island of Porto Rico, amounted to £1,408,000. Supposing that the Island of Puerto Rico furnished as much as £250,000 of this illicit commerce, which is a great deal, considering the languishing state in which its agriculture then was, and the smuggling trade its inhabitants had also with the Dutch of Saint Eustacia and of Curaçoa, it would be

demonstrated that in 1788 the English obtained from Martinico, Guadaloupe, and Mariegalante to the value of more than £1,100,000 of sugar, coffee, and cotton.

Other islands served also as deposits for this fraudulent trade : such as the Danish Islands of St. Thomas and St. Croix, and the little Swedish Island of St. Bartholomew, nearly all the trade there was carried on for the benefit of Great Britain, by Englishmen, naturalized Danes or Swedes. The British Islands of Saint Vincent and Grenada absorbed almost all the trade of St. Lucie : three-fourths of the produce of this island went to England. British merchandize only was consumed there, excepting some wines and provisions from France. Our old colony of Tobago, of which all the inhabitants were English, was less mysterious in its smuggling : English vessels naturalized at Dunkirk, brought British merchandize to it, and took a great portion of its produce to England.

It was the vices of our ancient revenue system, and that of the Spaniards, still more vicious, which gave the British commerce such an advantage over ours, and especially over that of the Spaniards, in spite of their rigorous restrictions.

By virtue of the twenty-fifth article of the decree of the council of state, of April, 1717, all the production of our colonies paid an import of three per cent. ; the produce of foreign colonies, which might be transmitted from thence, (an absurd regulation, whereby the neighbouring



colonies sent nothing to be sold in ours), were subject to the same duty, previous to their being sent to Europe. It was that which was termed the duty of the western dominions. By the nineteenth article of the same decree, they were subjected on their entry into France to duties whose quota was relative to each of the commodities. Cotton, for instance, was at first taxed at one franc, ten sous, per quintal; subsequent edicts raised this tariff eight sous additional per franc: at length cotton paid, on exportation from the colonies, a duty of nearly five per cent. At the period of which I speak, cotton did not pay any duty whatever in England; which was the reason that the British, who possessed no cotton colonies, was still on a par with ours by buying it at ten, and ten and a quarter per cent. higher than our merchants could afford, which is easily demonstrated. We shall suppose cotton at two hundred francs per quintal, ancient weight.

	francs. cents.	
The fifteenth article of the decree of 1717, established a duty of three per cent .....	6	0
There was added another duty of thirty sous per quintal, article nineteen of the same decree.....	1	50
By subsequent edicts, an additional duty of eight sous per franc...	3	0
Export duty in the colonies, $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent .....	9	50
	<hr/>	
	Total	20 0
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Could any thing be more absurd than to tax

cotton, indigo, arnetto, raw articles for our manufacturers, on an equality with sugar and coffee, objects of daily use; to tax raw sugar as high as clayed sugar, &c.? yet such was the policy of the ancient French government !\*

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\* I do not include coffee in these remarks, because St. Domingo produced an immense quantity of it previous to the French revolution, and had it not been for the destruction of that queen of colonies, this culture would have so progressively increased there, that in 1794, or 1795, coffee might have been sold at ten sous per pound, in the French markets: thus the government could have placed a heavy duty on that article without injury to its cultivation or to our commerce; for Jamaica and the other British colonies produced so little then, that it could not even be rated as an article of trade.

But things have since changed very much. The colonists of St. Domingo who took refuge in Jamaica, introduced the practice of this cultivation there, until then so much neglected by the English. The colonies of Demarara, Essequibo, and Berbice, on the continent, which may be said to be identified with Surinam, and Cayenne, as they are only separated from them by rivers; these establishments are become so considerable, that they will soon fill up, in the European markets, the void occasioned by the disturbances in St. Domingo, which they equal, at least, in fertility. Those colonies were so insignificant during the revolutionary war of the United States, that a British detachment made a conquest of them, and M. de Kersaint, with a frigate and two hundred soldiers, drove them out some time afterwards. Never did a country offer to the world, and in such a short time, such a proof of the surprising effects of an enterprising commercial spirit when properly directed. These colonies (Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice,) were restored to Holland by the peace of Versailles, in 1783. There were then scarcely two hundred whites there, proprietors of some new plantations, cultivated by about two thousand negroes. This country is flat, and it was formerly marshy, and shockingly unhealthy: it was, in fact, the grave



How then did it happen that the public treasury of Great Britain, which received no duties on the importation of cotton, lost nothing by it? Here is

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of Europeans: of a hundred individuals who might arrive there at the beginning of the year, scarcely ten remained alive at the end of it. Patience, hydraulics, and Dutch prudence have overcome all those obstacles. I visited that country in 1792; it was then flourishing and drained. Its population at that time amounted to nearly thirty-five thousand souls. More than half of this population consisted of English, who had deserted their barren colonies, to cultivate one of the most fertile soils in the world. The Dutch merchants advanced considerable sums, at four and a half per cent. to persons of all nations, who went to establish themselves in those new colonies. The interest of the first year was paid along with that of the second, when the latter became due. A sugar plantation could be established in eighteen months, and rendered twenty per cent. in that country; therefore, an industrious and prudent colonist might have cleared himself and grown rich in six years! The system of mortgage, which could not yet be introduced into the French colonies, was the source of that prosperity. He, to whom the money was lent, knew that he would be ejected, if he was not punctual in his payments, and the lender did not fear to risk his capital, because in default of payment he took possession of the plantation, which was generally worth much more than the sum he had lent. In 1806, the population of Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice, was more than sixty thousand persons without including the Indians.

What a glorious event for the spirit of commerce, is not the contrast formed by the brilliant situation to which these colonies were raised in such a short time, in comparison with the Spanish colonies, from which they are separated only by the Orinoco, and to which nature has lavished still more varied advantages! On one side is seen fine agriculture, rich commerce, an industrious population, that increased in an almost incredible progression; and on the other, misery in the midst of natural riches, filth, superstition, and laziness!!!

where the artifice and science of custom houses are found. Those duties were replaced by that which the same cotton paid, when manufactured into cloth, on its exportation from England; and it was paid by the foreign consumer. The British manufacturer expended ten per cent. less than the French manufacturer. This is not the place to speak of those machines, by means of which he worked cheaper than our manufacturers of that period. It is principally by the simple but able mode in which the revenue laws are regulated in Great Britain, that their exchequer was replenished, and that individuals enriched themselves, as much as by the negligence, ignorance, and want of patriotism in the ancient governments of France and Spain.

M. Depons says, that the English, the only competitors whom we had to fear, received their sugar charged with eighteen per cent. more than that which we receive from our colonies; and he therefore concludes that they must have traded to a disadvantage in foreign ports, when the French merchant was contented with moderate profits. He then adds, that it was owing to the wise combinations of our ancient legislation, that the preponderance which our trade had obtained was due.

Formerly, Barbadoes was the only one of the British colonies whose produce paid a duty on exportation of five and a half per cent.: the other colonies paid no duty whatever on exports. Sugar,



it is true, was charged with duties on importation into Great Britain to the amount of eighteen per cent.; but M. Depons ought to have known that on being sent from England to foreign countries, those duties were returned to the merchant, and that is what is termed the drawback. As to the other articles of colonial produce, if they were charged with duties, not only were those duties returned on exporting them to foreign states, but even in certain cases the government paid to the exporter a premium of encouragement, and this is what they call a bounty. Far from enjoying similar advantages, the productions of the French colonies, previous to the revolution, were loaded indiscriminately with accumulated duties, which amounted, as I have proved, to more than twenty per cent.

Though our sugars and coffees were charged with such duties, it is possible that we might still have maintained a competition with the British trade in those commodities in the European markets, because our colonies produced a much greater quantity of them than the English colonies, and because those colonies were much less fertile than ours; for though I cannot admit the enormous disproportion that Mr. Page\* would make be-

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\* Mr. Page considers that the net produce of the labour of a negro on a sugar plantation in Jamaica, is worth only one hundred and ninety two francs (£8) annually. (See his *Political Economy and Commerce of the Colonies*, Vol. I. page 19, et

tween the produce of a sugar plantation in Jamaica and in St. Domingo, still it is acknowledged by all persons who are well acquainted with those colonies, that a sugar plantation in St. Domingo, of an equal quantity of land and number of negroes, generally produced a fourth more than one in Jamaica, owing to the superior fertility of the former island.

The administration of the custom houses in the Spanish colonies, was founded on a still more vicious system than in ours. The tariffs were more uncertain, vague and arbitrary. It was a most obscure and ambiguous chaos, known only to the officers of customs, and consequently offering great temptations to the contraband trade, and to the venality of the administrators. All who have frequented those colonies know that the trifling trade carried on there, was monopo-

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seq.) I cannot admit such a calculation ; I think it ought not to be estimated at less than two hundred and fifty francs. Mr. Page values the produce of a negro in the French Antilles in general, at 333 francs, and still more in St. Domingo. I believe his calculations to be tolerably exact, in regard to the French colonies ; but I am sure he has judged too unfavourably of the soil and cultivation of Jamaica, when he said that a given surface of land employed in a sugar plantation there, and an equal extent of ground occupied for the same purpose in St. Domingo, is as eight hundred and sixteen to two thousand ! In general the sugar plantations of St. Domingo, Cuba, and Trinidad, produced more than those of Jamaica, owing to the superior fertility of the soil of those islands ; but I believe I may safely assert that this difference is not more than a fourth or fifth.



lized by the viceroys, captains-general, intendants, comptrollers, &c. who had commercial connexions with the merchants in the British colonies, and, for some years past, with the United States of America. In 1805 or 1806, an Anglo-Portuguese house established in Philadelphia, had, for instance, the exclusive supply of flour for the Island of Cuba: others have had exclusive privileges for the sale of negroes, &c. &c.

It was not quite the same in our colonies: if the French administrators have not always disdained to engage in contraband speculations with our neighbours and even our enemies, at least this justice must be rendered to them, that they did not ill-treat those who were in the habits of such illegal speculations; whilst the bashaws of the Spanish colonies used the utmost rigour towards the unfortunate persons who were captured by the guardacostas, going to sell their commodities in the neighbouring colonies, for the purpose of procuring some of the most necessary articles; and that whilst the government of the mother country did nothing to promote their agriculture and commerce; so that the colonists lived in indigence, while they were overburdened with natural riches.

As to the contraband trade in the French colonies, if prejudicial to France, it must be admitted that it was advantageous to the colonists; so that it was not a total loss to the mother country. But the administration of the British colonies is

so regulated, that though they have no contraband trade in the produce of their soil, and that, in this respect, there is no trade in the world less free than theirs; yet affairs were so ably regulated, and the interests of all so justly balanced, that colonists, manufacturers and merchants flourished equally.

It has been said at the beginning of this chapter, that though Spain, with absurd laws and regulations, and the numerous imposts which embarrassed and ruined her colonial commerce, could neither export nor manufacture the produce of her immense colonies, still she would neither permit them to be exported or manufactured by themselves, nor suffer foreigners to export them, and give in exchange to the colonists those articles that they most needed. From thence resulted a contraband trade, by which that blind and oppressive government was defrauded of its duties; a trade which kept the produce of those colonies at a wretched price, as their sale depended on the uncertain arrival of a greater or less number of smuggling vessels, which were exposed to the caprices and fluctuating interests of the officers of the Spanish government, whose connivance they were obliged to purchase. From this proceeded the languishing state of Spanish colonial agriculture and commerce; from this also sprung the colossal fortunes acquired in two or three years, by generals, intendants and commissioners of customs.

Spain had not imposed any land tax on her



colonies: the tythes which the king shared with the clergy, served in place of it. The Indians alone, paid a personal tax, or capitation. The revenues of the crown were composed of the local duties, collected on sales in the custom-houses, and on the transfer of lands, &c. There were also municipal customs, which were exacted on some of those objects, and served to defray the expences of the towns and commercial courts of justice, or consolados. The puertos mayores paid both kinds of duties; in the puertos menores, the municipal duties only were paid. The duties which had been collected in a principal port were returned when the merchandize on which it was levied, was despatched to a minor port; and *vice versa*, when from a minor port an exportation was made to a superior one, it was necessary previously, to pay the duty which should be levied at such principal port, had the merchandize been sent there direct.

After the abolition of exclusive commercial companies, and the no less odious privileges of Seville and Cadiz, the distinguishing the American into major and minor ports, is one of the most wise and beneficent regulations of the cedula of 1778, commonly called that of free trade. The spirit of this regulation was to establish a balance between the most frequented ports, and those which were least so, in order to induce the exporters of the mother country to send consignments to the latter. This measure had the

most beneficial results for the colonial agriculture and commerce of Spain.

The major ports in the captain generalship of Caraccas, were La Guayra, Porto Cavello and Maracaybo: Cumana, Barcelona, the Island of Margarita and the Orinoco were the minor ports. Port Spain was a free port for a limited time; that is, all nations were permitted to trade there: this privilege, granted to that colony in 1783, had given it, in 1797, an augmentation of population and prosperity, and an importance it could not otherwise have attained in a whole century.

The edict of the 28th February, 1784, established a proper distinction between the duties which the various commodities should pay on importation from Spain into the colonies; first, free goods, or productions of the soil and manufactures of Spain: the quota of duties on importation we have enumerated, amounted to ten per cent. and only affected the merchandize proceeding from the soil and manufactures of Spain; such goods were termed free articles. There was, secondly, another tariff for the produce of foreign countries, manufactured in Spain, these were called contributable articles, and which paid twelve and a half per cent. Thirdly, goods purely foreign, paid only seven per cent. on importation at American ports; but as they had paid fifteen per cent. on entering Spain, and seven on departure for America, without reckoning the



duties I have enumerated, and those of internacion, indulto, &c. it will be seen that these duties amounted to more than forty-three per cent. on foreign merchandize.

It is now time that I should present the nomenclature of imposts levied in the Spanish colonies, by the exchequer and the custom-houses.

The bulls, whose annual sale was one of the branches of the revenue of the crown, and of the clergy, stand first.

Then come the taxes of alcavala, almoxarifazgo, armada and armadilla, of internacion, indulto, corso, aprovechamientos; the licences of pulperias or taverns, on the tafia and the guarapo, duties of aduanas, laguna, composition for lands, on letting lands, of lances, of the half annatas; in some provinces, a part of the tythes, in others, the whole tythe; the ecclesiastical mesadas, and royal ninths, the tax levied on the sale or change of public employments, and that on the profits on annual income of those places or employments; the tribute or capitation tax on the Indians; stamped paper, the right of passage, the fifths of mines, the hospitalities, the salt works, confiscations, restitutions, vacant successions, vacant majorities and minorities, the exclusive sale of tobacco, cock-fightings, the passage-boats on the river Apure: this last tax was peculiar to the government of Caraccas.

Then follow the municipal duties of consulado and avaria, of cabildo and offiel executor.

Those of my readers who may be curious to be informed of the particulars of this host of taxes, may consult the work of M. Depons; my principal object being to give a knowledge of the duties levied on commerce, and the mode of exacting them on importation and exportation.

Those duties are :

1st. *Alcavala de la Mar*. This duty was in the Captain Generalship of Venezuela, four per cent.\* on all kinds of merchandize, indiscriminately, which entered the ports. It was paid on entry, and not on the departure of merchandize. At Carthagena de las Indias, it was two per cent.; at Guayaquil, three; at Lima, six; and at Vera Cruz, four. M. Depons says, that it produced in the provinces of Venezuela, in 1793, 150,862

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\* The *Alcavala de la Mar* is the offspring of the *Alcavala de Tierra*. The Cortes had granted to the kings of Spain a tax on transfers and sales, to assist them to maintain the war against the Moors; this tax was called *Alcavala*: those monarchs afterwards established this impost in their possessions in America, towards the end of the sixteenth century. It was only two per cent. at first, but it was raised to five per cent. towards the middle of last century. It was levied on every thing that was sold, moveable or immoveable. All the productions of the soil, as well as those of industry, eggs, pulse, forage, &c. &c. paid the *Alcavala* on entering the towns. Shopkeepers paid this tax by subscription. This would have produced enormous sums, if in the Spanish possessions there had been more activity in commercial affairs and less contraband trade. The *Alcavala de Tierra* produced to the revenue on an average, in the provinces of Venezuela, 400,000 hard dollars.



Dollars.

dollars; in 1794, 151,408; in 1795, 105,251; in 1796, 130,644; and in 1797, only 10,248 dollars; because, according to that writer, maritime commerce was in the last named year, almost entirely suspended. The true cause of the diminution of this duty was from the English having taken possession of Trinidad in the commencement of 1797, that island became the staple of almost all the trade of Venezuela; a commerce which was carried on with as little concealment as if Spain and Great Britain had been in the most strict alliance. Before the English had possessed themselves of all the commerce of the country it produced annually.....

150,000

2d. Duty of Almoxarifazgo. It was levied also on all that was imported and exported; it had been fixed at fifteen per cent. on all that was imported from Spain, at the time of the discovery of America. But it was reduced about a century ago, to three per cent. on Spanish merchandize, and fixed at seven per cent. on foreign merchandize, imported in Spanish ships. The Almoxarifazgo on exportation, is two per cent. on home produce, and three on foreign. Its usual annual produce in the Captain Generalship of Caraccas, was .....

200,000

3d. The duty of Armada and Armadilla, or tax for the royal navy and the flotilla. This tax was established for aiding the expences of the navy, when it was occupied in protecting the colonies against pirates; and though those coasts have not

Dollars.

been infested for more than a century, the duty continues to be levied; it is two per cent. and rendered annually on an average, from eighty to.....	90,000
4th. The duty of Corso was instituted for paying the maintenance of <i>guardacostas</i> , (revenue cruizers,) for preventing contraband trade: it was three per cent. and rendered..	150,000
Total of the royal duties on the imports and exports of merchandize.....	590,000

I shall not particularize the proceeds of the other royal duties and imposts paid in the interior of the country, and enumerated in another chapter, and which amounted to, including the bulls\*..... 1,210,000

Total amount of the royal duties and imposts in the general government of Venezuela, not including the expenses of government and of collection ..... 1,800,000

*Civic Duties.*

The united duties of Consulado and Average, were levied in the maritime custom-houses, and paid to the cashier of the consulado or chamber of commerce, to bear the expenses

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\* The sale of bulls and indulgences amounted annually on an average in the provinces of Venezuela, to 180,000 dollars; of which, one third belonged to the crown, and the other two thirds to the clergy.



	Dollars.
of that court ; it was one per cent. on all that was exported to Spain, or to the other Spanish colonies, and three per cent. on all that was exported to foreign colonies, or which came from them. Beasts of burden were subject to a particular tariff. Horses and mules exported paid one dollar each : oxen one per cent. according to the valuation made of them by the custom-house officers. New negroes brought by the British contractors, were exempted from all duties : they produced about .....	100,000
The duty of fiel executor.....	70,000
That of the cabildo .....	80,000
Total of the civic duties.....	250,000

All those royal and munificent duties, which amounted, as specified, to 2,050,000 dollars, were not sufficient for paying the expences of government in the captain generalship of Venezuela. The Intendant received annually about 1,200,000 dollars from the treasuries of Mexico and the kingdom of New Grenada. Thus the expences of that government amounted annually to nearly seven hundred and fifty thousand pounds ; for of all the imposts levied in that country, not a farthing passed into the royal treasury of Spain.

The natural consequence of so many prohibitions and duties was to retard the prosperity of the Spanish colonies, to leave them to the mercy of smugglers, and to hinder the extension of com-

merce and national industry. The two last kings of the late dynasty had made, it is true, some useful regulations for encouraging national industry, in placing considerable duties on foreign manufactures: but experience has proved that if they were dictated by patriotism, the influence of the cabinet of St. James at the court of Madrid, rendered those regulations null, as far as regarded British commerce; but they were executed with the utmost severity, to exclude from Spanish commerce the productions of the industry of other nations, and particularly those of the French manufactories.

In vain had Philip V. issued several edicts, as favourable to French commerce, as they were useful to that of Spain: it was in vain that this monarch, in ratifying, on the 13th March, 1713, the sixth article of the treaty of the Pyrenees, and the cédulas of Charles II. of the months of March and December, 1670, ordered that France should not only be treated among the most favoured nations, but that she should be distinguished *en todo lo que fuera mas favorable*: it was not long before those intentions were eluded by the most strict perseverance. At length, by an edict issued at Madrid, in December, 1760, foreigners, and particularly the French, lost all the privileges in Spain: from the above period may be dated the influence of the cabinet of St. James in that country. The Duke de Choiseul endeavoured in vain to mitigate the severity of that edict, by



stipulating in the sixth article of the family compact that the subjects of each of the two monarchs should be treated in the territory of the other as their own subjects; that they should enjoy the same facilities of commerce, &c. there. Never did the Spanish government put this in practice with French subjects, except in circumstances when such a concession would be burthensome to them.

The following were the privileges to which the French were entitled by the family compact.

First, Though established and domiciled in Spain, the French never lost the rights and prerogatives of French citizens and subjects of His Most Catholic Majesty.

Second, They were not subjected in any thing, or in any case, to Spanish jurisdiction; in commercial affairs they acknowledged no other judges than the consul or the commissary of commercial affairs of France.

Third, They enjoyed every possible immunity in regard to all things necessary for the subsistence and use of their families.

Fourth, They were exempted from all services, whether patrimonial or personal, from all tributes ordinary or extraordinary, and from all military services.

Fifth, Their houses, shops or stores could not be searched by any Spanish judge or magistrate, of whatsoever rank, excepting in case of a criminal taken in the fact: even then it was necessary

that the search should be made by the authority and in the presence of the French consul.

Sixth, They had the liberty to keep their commercial accounts in any language they pleased, and those books could not be searched in any case.

Seventh, The merchandize which they had imported into Spain, and on which they had once paid the custom-house duties, might be transported into any of the provinces of the interior, and even be exported, without paying any other duties.

All these fine privileges granted to the French merchants, existed only on paper!

Their independence once established, the Spanish colonies will not, it is hoped, delay opening a trade with Japan, China and India: their coasts bordering on the Pacific Ocean, give them great advantages in such a trade, over European nations. Nine easy communications between the South Sea and the Atlantic ocean, are pointed out by M. de Humboldt in his Political Essay on New Spain. Since 1788, boats have sailed up through the Ravine of la Raspadura to Choco, by which they have passed from the Pacific Ocean into the Sea of the Antilles.\*

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\* The Editor has been informed that Mr. Arrowsmith is occupied in drawing the plan of a projected canal and communication between the South Pacific and Gulf of Mexico. The execution of this work will most probably be one of the first objects of a regularly established independent government in New Granada, and opens a field of highly interesting speculation both to the politicians and merchants of Europe.



Porto Bello and Nicaragua will be, in some years, the staples where all America bordering on the Atlantic, and probably Europe itself will go to purchase Indian merchandize. This change in that great trade, will produce one as considerable in the relative wealth and power of states, as that of the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope. The Americans themselves will take to Bengal and China the metals which they furnish to Europe for maintaining this trade. The day when commerce shall take this new direction, and that day is not so distant as many suppose, will be that of the independence of the nations in Asia and America, not to mention those innumerable advantages which necessarily result from unshackled commerce.\*

According to the informations I obtained from official statements in Venezuela, during the year 1807, the value of the agricultural produce exported from the provinces which composed this fine country, exclusive of Trinidad, from 1794 until 1806, amounted to about four millions of dollars annually; but according to the documents taken from the custom houses of Port Spain in Trinidad, and from those of the Islands

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\*To those who foresee this great change I shall merely observe that the Americans of the United States have carried on the East India trade, for more than fifteen years past, with greater relative profits than the English; those of Spanish America will have only a third of the distance to sail, and will navigate on cheaper terms.

Grenada, Tobago, Curaçoa, St. Thomas', and Martinico, which carried on the contraband trade with the provinces of Venezuela. I am sure the smugglers carried off annually, on an average, more than 2,500,000 dollars in produce; consisting of cocoa, cotton, indigo, a little cochineal, arnotto, woods for dying and cabinet makers, copper, hides, maize, salted and smoked meat and fish, oxen, horses, mules, asses, monkeys, parrots, &c. and about six or seven hundred thousand dollars in specie, and since 1801, a small quantity of sugar\* and coffee. There were annually exported from these provinces to Spain and Mexico,† about 2,000,000 dollars in colonial produce; which increases the exportations to about 5,200,000 dollars.

The official statements of the intendency of Caraccas specified the importations into this country, including contraband trade, at only 5,500,000 dollars, at the same period; but those statements are below the truth. On an average from 1789, to 1807, the annual importations amounted to nearly 6,500,000 dollars, including

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\* Ten years ago there was scarcely as much sugar made as sufficed the local consumption. I believe I do not exaggerate when I say that, on an average, every individual poor or rich consumes at least one pound of it per day. It is mixed with almost all kinds of food and drink; and is indispensable for chocolate, which is taken three or four times each day.

† A great quantity of Venezuela cocoa, commonly called Caracca, is exported to Vera Cruz.



smuggling. Previous to the French revolution, we had half of this trade. The French merchants of Martinico, the Dutch of St. Eustacia and Curaçoa, the Danish of St. Thomas', and the Swedish of St. Bartholomew, had their share in this commerce ; but since the Island of Trinidad was taken by the British, in 1797, they have obtained all the trade of that country, where they have established commercial connexions, even as far as the central point of South America, in Santa Fé de Bogota, capital of the kingdom of New Grenada, whose bishop, a dealer in human flesh, carried on, in 1788 and 1789, the negro trade, in conjunction with the English house of Ch—t and B—u of Dominica.

## CHAP. V.

TRINIDAD.—Geographical Description of the Island.—Guaraouns.—  
 Their singular Mode of Living, Trade, and Habitations.—Mouths  
 of the ORINOCO.—Guarapiche.—Gulph of Paria.—Scenery.—Port  
 Spain.—Rivers of Trinidad.—Its Bays and Harbours.—Natural  
 Canals.—Fish.—Mangrove Trees.—Birds.—THE ASPHALTUM LAKE.  
 Its Peculiarities.—Volcanic Remains.—MOUNTAINS.—Conjectures.  
 —Las Cuevas.—Nature of the Soil.—Excavations at Guadaloupe.—  
 Crater of Erin.—A new Metal.

THERE is perhaps no part of the new world, which offers to the navigator, fatigued with the monotony of a sea voyage, a view at once so picturesque and imposing as the approach to Trinidad, placed almost at the mouth of the Orinoco, as a kind of barrier to restrain the impetuosity of its tide and currents.

This island has the form of an irregular square. The Spanish geographers compare it to an ox hide: it is sixty British miles from east to west, and forty-five from north to south; which makes a surface of about forty-two thousand two hundred square miles British. Trinidad is separated from the continent by the Gulf of Paria. The length of this gulf is about thirty marine leagues, while its greatest breadth, from north to south, is



about fifteen. The second mouth of the Orinoco, called the Canal of Pedernalos, and a great number of other channels formed by a multitude of islets, almost level with the water, all in a northern direction, continually discharge the waters of that fine river into this gulf. Those waters flow into the ocean by two great channels, commonly called the MOUTHS OF THE ORINOCO.

Those isles are evidently formed by the deposits of the river: although inundated during the rainy season, yet they are covered with palms and cocoas, which, at the same time, supply the islanders with food, drink, a bark which they weave, and wood for their furniture and canoes. The existence of the tribe of Guaraouns appears to be connected with that of the family of palms, as the fate of certain birds and butterflies depends on that of particular trees and flowers.

The Guaraouns have contrived means of fixing their habitations on the palm trees: they choose a group of them, where the trees grow nearest to each other: at fifteen or twenty feet above high water mark they twist and weave their boughs to form a floor, which is then covered with the broad leaves. The roofs of those aerial huts are also covered with the leaves of the same tree, to which their canoes are fastened. Those Indians are in number about ten thousand: they are strong, tall and well made, less indolent than the other savages of South America, passionately fond of dancing, gay, social, and hospitable.

They are not so reserved as the other savages their neighbours. Their soft and harmonious language is rich, when compared with those in their vicinity. The Guaraouns are expert fishers, and have dogs like those of the European shepherds, which they employ to catch fish in shallow water; they caress those animals continually, and treat them with the greatest kindness. Their trade consists in fish, nets, hammocks, and baskets: they are at peace with all the world, even with the Spanish government, which has, for a long time past, renounced the project of subjugating them. I had frequent means of observing this little nation: while among them I often thought myself existing in the days of Astrea: their society is a continual scene of peace, abundance, gaiety, and concord. I sometimes regretted that old recollections, and social habits, did not permit me to settle among them, and they are the only savage tribe who ever inspired me with that desire.

The eastern mouth of the Orinoco was named the Serpent's Mouth by the great Columbus: it is about three leagues wide. In the middle, between the island and the continent, is an islet of the most wild appearance, called the Soldier; it is the resort of sea birds, of which innumerable swarms obscure the horizon at sunrise and sunset.

The northern mouths or channels, called the Dragon's Mouths, are formed by four Islets, which are placed at almost equal distances between the island and the continent. The Islet



of Chacachacarreo forms the principal mouth, with Cape de Paria opposite. Such is the name which Columbus found given to this tongue of land, where the province of Guiana or of the Orinoco begins: this is separated from that of Cumana or New Andalusia, by the Guarapiche, which is not a branch of the Orinoco, as was formerly supposed. This river is formed of different streams which have their sources in the mountains of Bergantin, and in the Mesas (small plains, somewhat elevated) of Amana, Guanipa, and Tororo, only a few leagues in a direct line from the coast of the gulf. At the place of its confluence with the Arco, this river is from forty to sixty fathoms deep. The Horquetta (the confluence of two rivers in Spanish), where the Guarapiche is so deep, is five leagues from the sea. The Arco is sixteen fathoms deep at Puerto San Juan, which is at twenty-five leagues from the ocean.

Antiquaries and oriental scholars are, without doubt, surprised to find in those savage forests the word Cumana, and other words of Greek origin, before the arrival of Europeans; also the Indian word Paria, which designates in the new world as well as Hindostan, a cast of people despised and persecuted by their neighbours.

There are few places so salubrious, and yet so fertile in Southern America, as the vallies of Cape de Paria. Many tribes of Indians inhabit its coasts. Some French families took refuge there during the first storms of the revolution: a con-

siderable number of French colonists from Trinidad, Tobago and Grenada, have also settled in the same neighbourhood. At first the Spanish government gave them a good reception; but the beautiful plantations of cocoa, coffee, cotton, and even sugar manufactories which they soon formed, tempted the jealous avarice of some local officers of the government. From 1802, various pretences were invented for getting rid of, and plundering them. Some were driven out and sent away from the most contemptible motives.\*

Ships arriving at Trinidad from the windward islands, excepting those which go from the colonies situated to the west and south of the Orinoco, to avoid being carried to leeward, first make the northern coast of the island towards the port of Las Cuevas, so named from its caves, where the sea breaks with great fury.

The entry of this gulf presents scenes both varied and magnificent: to the east is that majestic river, compared to which those of Europe are but as rivulets! Its waves meeting those of the sea, and incessantly disputing the empire of the gulf: to the west appear rising from the bosom of the horizon the mountains of Cumana; and by degrees, on approaching the western coast of Trinidad, you discover numerous vallies and plains enamelled with eternal verdure. On nearing the

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\* Among others M. Isnardi, a native of Piedmont; the same, I believe, who is now secretary to the Congress of Venezuela.



coast, the navigator's view is charmed by a landscape covered with various plantations, and diversified by meandering rivers and rivulets which water it. A strange and sometimes grotesque medley of white, copper colour and black men, animate this scene. Whilst the numerous canoes of Caribs and Guaraouns skim the gulf in every direction, the traveller sees and hears the negroes working and singing in cadence: troops of monkeys jumping from tree to tree, and swinging themselves while suspended from the branches by their tails: \* innumerable flocks of magnificent birds enliven the scene, by the beauty and variety of their colours. The shores continually resound

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\* Travellers have not exaggerated, when they asserted that a particular class of apes, who have a great dread of the water, when obliged to cross a stream, climb up the nearest tree to the bank, and form a chain by hanging from the tails of each other. If the river is not wide, the whole string of animals swing backward and forwards until the lowest alights on the opposite bank, when he who is uppermost slides down the tree, and they are immediately pulled over by the one to whom the post of honour had been assigned. It should be remarked that as fast as the latter's companions are drawn to land, they assist him in dragging the others to the bank. This very singular practice, which has frequently amused me, is accompanied with howlings, cries, and grimaces, sufficient to frighten any one not accustomed to the neighbourhood of those living caricatures of our species.

It is equally true that this most mischievous tribe invariably place centinels whenever they halt, particularly when employed on a foraging excursion: this fact I have ascertained to my cost, having often surprized bodies of them pillaging my fields of maize in Trinidad.

with the songs of some and the screeching of others: at the end of this smiling plain, rises the northern mountains, like an amphitheatre, their summits crowned with the noble trees of the tropics, above which the palm, waving its lofty head, attracts the thunder, and forces the clouds to depose their waters at its feet, from whence precipitating in cascades and torrents, they form rivulets and streams.\*

Thus the Gulf of Paria is formed by the western shore of Trinidad, and the opposite coast of Cumana. Ships may anchor all over the gulf, in from three to six fathom water, and on ground of gravel and mud.

The principal ports of the island are, the Harbour of Chagaramus, situated at the entrance of the northern mouths, three leagues west of Port Spain. It is capable of receiving the largest ships of war, having from four to forty fathoms depth, and a bottom of gravel and mud: its shores are bold and steep. It was in this port, the best and safest of the colony, that Rear-admiral Apodaca burnt his squadron, when that under Admiral Harvey conveying the military force commanded by Sir Ralph Abercrombie appeared off the island in 1797.

The Carenage is not so good a port, not having more than from two to four fathoms, ren-

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\* It is well known that these palms serve as electrical conductors.



dering it only fit for small vessels of war and merchantmen.

Gaspard Grande, is an islet within the mouths, where the Spanish ships of war anchored sometimes under the useless protection of a battery, placed there to defend the entrance of the mouths, and which, by its bad position, is not calculated for defence.

Port Spain is situated in the western part of the island, and gives its name to the capital. Besides several quays which belong to individuals, this town has a very fine one of stone, which runs several hundred yards into the sea, and is defended by a battery. The hills which command the town have been fortified by the present possessors of the island. Next to Chagaramus, it is the best port in Trinidad, and one of the most safe and extensive bays in the world.

All the western coast of the island is a series of bays, where vessels may anchor in safety at all times. The most important place, after Port Spain, is that of Annaparima. On this ground, which in 1791, presented only a marsh and fishing hamlet, the English have built a fine town, where a considerable trade is carried on.

The principal rivers, and which are navigable in the western part of the island, are the Caroni, Chaguanas, Barrancones, Couva, Guaracara, and Siparia.

The Caroni is navigable from its mouth in the gulf, to its junction with the Aripo, which makes

a distance of about six leagues. The Oripo is also navigable. If a canal were cut between this river and the Oropuche, which discharges itself on the eastern coast, where navigation and anchorage are very difficult, whenever the winds are northerly or eastwardly, a safe communication might be established between that interesting part of the island, and the gulf. The fertile grounds which lie between those two rivers will remain uncultivated until this work is executed.

The Guanaba, another river that flows into the Caroni, is navigable, but has less water than the Aripo. There are several other streams in the western part of the island, which being navigable for canoes and wherries, afford to the colonists established there, great facilities for the cultivation of their lands and the transport of their produce: they are also very abundant in fish. Though the northern and eastern coasts are well furnished with rivers, they are not equally so with ports and roadsteads.

There are numerous shoals on the northern coast from Maqueribe to the mouth of the river Ellebranche: it is almost every where perpendicular, excepting at the openings of numerous little vallies which are irrigated by fine rivers, or rivulets of pure and crystalline water. If it be considered that the winds blow three fourths of the year from the east and north, it may be readily imagined how very precarious and difficult the coasting trade is on those shores. But



this is an inconvenience to which Trinidad is subject, in common with all the islands of the American archipelago. To the northward, the principal ports are Maqueribe and Las Cuevas, where Fort Abercrombie is situated. This fort, and that of Maqueribe, were defended in 1807, by batteries of twelve and twenty-four pounders, for the purpose of protecting British merchantmen against the depredations of French privateers. To the north-east are the ports of Rio Grande, Toco, and Cumana. At the east is Balandra Bay, or Boat Island; where safe anchorage may be found at all times for coasters that draw no more than five or six feet water. Further eastward are Guias Creek and Mayaro Bay.

Guaiguaira is the safest port in the eastern part of the island, because it is sheltered by a point of land against the easterly wind, and its entrance is only exposed to the south winds, which are neither frequent nor violent on those coasts.

This part of the island has very fine rivers which are navigable for small craft; the principal are, Rio Grande, Oropuche, and Nariva, or Mitán, as it is called by the Creoles, because it runs through a plain of cocoa trees, forming a forest which is one of the natural beauties of the island: it really presents an enchanting spectacle to the navigator who arrives from Europe, and has not yet witnessed the majestic state of vegetation in the equinoctial regions. In running down the coast this forest presents the form of a crescent.

During the revolutionary war of the United States, the Count d'Estaing, who always acted as the father of his seamen and soldiers, employed a boat constantly on this coast for collecting cocoa nuts, which were distributed among the ship's companies of his squadron: this wise measure preserved them from the ravages of scurvy. The chronicles of the country state, that in the year 1730, a boat laden with cocoa nuts from the Guaraouns' islets was wrecked on this coast, and that the waves having thrown them on shore they gradually multiplied.

Guatavo, which the French, who always mangle the names of places, have called Ortoir river, has been improperly deemed the most considerable of those to windward of the island, on the report of an ignorant French emigrant land surveyor, who, whilst he lived, enjoyed the reputation of an able engineer. He made a bad copy of the beautiful map of this island, by the unfortunate Cosmo de Churucca. The map of M....., of which that of Faden is only a copy, still more incorrect, places hills where there are marshes, &c. Some of his errors were voluntary, if we may believe many who were deceived by them. As it is rather frequent for British speculators to purchase land in the new world on the faith of maps and plans, and that grounds in the neighbourhood of navigable rivers are of a considerable comparative value, some of those speculators, called land jobbers, charmed with the beauty of



the river Guatavo as represented by M..... and Faden, bought considerable lots of it.

I am certain that excepting for a few hundred yards from its mouth, the Guatavo is not navigable, unless for small boats; yet M..... in the explanation of his map, positively says that it is navigable as far as Morne Rouge, which would be almost to its source, thus making a distance of six leagues.

According to the observations of Captain Columbine, one of the best hydrographers in the British navy, this river ceases to be navigable for vessels that draw more than five feet water four miles from the entrance. When that able officer surveyed the northern and eastern coasts of this island, he observed another error of a contrary kind by the land surveyor already noticed, and who had made the river Nariva much smaller than the Guatavo. Captain Columbine sailed up to its source, for seven leagues and a half inland, and found it navigable as far as three quarters of a league from its source, for vessels of two and three hundred tons. M..... has marked two natural canals between the rivers Nariva and Guatavo in his map, whilst in reality there exists but one. The cause of this error is, that during the heavy rains in winter, the floods create several communications between these two rivers, which are on the same level.

This is one of those effects that Trinidad possesses in common with the neighbouring continent.

The most able geographers had treated the natural canals which establish a communication between the Orinoco and Amazons as a chimera. At present no one will attempt to deny the assertion, since M. de Humboldt has sailed from one of those rivers into the other. Before the reputation of that learned traveller had placed this important fact of physical geography beyond all doubt, boats were often seen to go from San Carlos on the Rio Negro, to San Thomé de Angostura. The coast and plain of Mayaro are low and unhealthy; but to the south, those of Guaiquaire, present a magnificent amphitheatre, and a landscape at once smiling, fertile, and salubrious.

Further south is the fine river Moruga, the banks and vicinity of which abound in logwood. The shores and mouths of those rivers are full of rounded pebbles, whilst they are very rare near those on the western coast. Nevertheless, in the interior, the same rivers that discharge themselves on the western coast, have many and very handsome pebbles. I found one of them, among others, which embarrassed me extremely: it was red, having the colour of burnt brick, and is sometimes as hard. Those rivers on the eastern coast, especially that of Moruga, produce abundance of excellent oysters, which attach themselves to the stems and branches of mangrove trees. There is not another island of the new world, which, in proportion to its size, possesses so many navigable rivers as Trinidad. Amongst



the variety of fish on this coast, one of the most remarkable is the *Squalus Zygæna*: it is about twelve feet long and thick in proportion. Its eyes are large and terrifying, the head has the shape of a hammer; its mouth and the three rows of teeth are still better adapted for biting than those of the common shark, which it greatly resembles in other respects.

Another, very like the codfish, is also common, and as dangerous as the former. One day when near the mouth of the Oropiche with two engineers, our Indian fishermen took one which had the head of a negro in its maw. I need scarcely say that we declined tasting this prize, the Indians showed the same repugnance; but some of the negroes who accompanied us, regaled themselves with it, and salted what they could not devour. It is, however, well flavoured, and there is a great consumption of it in the colony.

The sea cow (*trichecus manati*) is amphibious, and often found in pairs, with their young, browsing out of the water on the marine plants in the plain of cocoa trees. They usually weigh from one thousand to eleven hundred pounds. It is asserted that they are found in the Orinoco of eighteen hundred pounds weight. Its flesh resembles that of the hog, is good for eating either fresh or salted, while its grease is used like lard.

Trinidad has marshes which the Spaniards call lagunas, and the Creoles lagons, in the vicinity of the principal rivers. They produce abundance

of mangrove trees: this is the *rhizophora mangle* of Jaquin, the wood of which is excellent for buildings. In the dry season these marshes become savanas, on which cattle are turned out, and where great quantities of game are found. There are also an abundance of land tortoises of various kinds, whose flesh is both delicate and nourishing. Those savanas abound in marine birds, grey partridges, water hens, flamingoes, and white woodcocks, the flesh of which is as delicate as that of the European woodcock. It is difficult to form an idea of the innumerable quantities of wild ducks that frequent the rivers: they are sometimes taken in such numbers, as to be sold for fivepence each at Port Spain. I know of three species of them, without including teal. The largest resemble the Indian duck, the second our common duck, and the third is very small with a beautiful plumage, including blue, rose coloured, yellow and white, also a brilliant gold-coloured star in the forehead of about an inch in diameter: it is called Ouikiki.

The most remarkable of those marshes is the asphaltum lake, which has no communication with the great lagoon as marked on some maps, This singular lake, vulgarly called the pitch lake, is about half a league in length, and the same in breadth. It is situated near the sea, and elevated eighty feet above its level.

Here the coast presents a confused mixture of marly earths, (which marl is argillaceous,) im-



pregnated with asphaltum. An excellent limpid and running water is found in the crevices of the asphaltum, as far as six feet deep, in which there is a great quantity of small fish. All these crevices called funnels, incline to a conic form. The bottoms of some are so liquid, that when poles are thrust in to them they disappear. The people who inhabit the neighbourhood assured me, that having put marks on the pieces of wood thrust into the funnels, they found them again, a few days afterwards on the sea shore. I saw several pieces of wood in the lake completely changed into bitumen: in one of the funnels I found the trunk of a large tree, which perfectly retained its round shape. I caused it to be sawed; when it was observed to be completely impregnated with petroleum.

I have also seen the same phenomenon in the provinces of New Barcelona and Cumana, near the Lake of Cariaco; and various parts of those regions where the currents of the sea have formed large masses of vegetable substances.

There is no phenomenon which offers more variety and mobility than the surface of the asphaltum lake. Here are seen groups of shrubs; there tufts of wild pine-apples and aloes. Among those shrubs and flowers, swarms of magnificent butterflies, and brilliant humming birds seek their food, enlivening a scene which, if it were deprived of animals and vegetables, would present an exact image of Tartarus. Where an islet of

several feet diameter had been seen in the evening, there is often nothing to be found the next morning but a gulf in which it has been swallowed up; whilst on the side of it has arisen another island, that will soon be covered with vegetation!

Not far from the borders of the lake, among the beautiful plantations and fine forests that surround it, is found petroleum mixed with the earth, which it tends greatly to fertilize. The best and finest fruits of the colony come from that district; its pine-apples, in particular, are less fibrous, larger, more aromatic, and of a deeper golden colour than any where else. South of Cape de la Brea, is a pit or submarine volcano, which the sea causes to boil up, and discharge a considerable quantity of petroleum.

In the eastern part of the island, and Bay of Mayaro, is another volcano, which in the months of March and June every year, produces some detonations, with a noise resembling that of a cannon or thunder. This noise is succeeded by flames and smoke which rise from the abyss, and some minutes afterwards the waves throw on shore pieces of bitumen, as black and brilliant as jet. By mixing this asphaltum in proper proportions with tallow and linseed oil, a kind of tar is made fit for caulking ships, and which has the inestimable property of preserving them from the corrosions of the sea-worm. Since 1805, the English have employed it very successfully for



that purpose. The island produces sufficient to caulk thousands of ships every year.

An inhabitant of the south informed me, in 1799, that some sportsmen, who lost their way in the forests of Point Icacos, assured him they had discovered a volcano behind the Renusson Plantation, in the midst of the lake which is in the neighbourhood. I employed one of those sportsmen to conduct me to the place, where we arrived after a journey of three hours.

At length we reached the summit of a hill of argillaceous clay: at the top, and around this, are a great number of little mounds, one or two feet high: the tops of those cones are truncated and open; they are so many vents which exhale a gas, smelling like sulphurated hydrogen. On the most elevated part of this hill is a cone of about six feet high, pierced from the summit to its base like the others, which continually discharges a whitish matter that has the taste of alum. Although a sound is heard, which indicates that the fluid is in a state of agitation, and it continually evaporates globules of an elastic fluid, the scum at the orifice of the cone is cold. I could not touch the bottom of this pit with four poles tied together strongly at the ends, and which measured sixty feet; having let them go suddenly, they disappeared.

Though there is neither stone nor sand in the circumference of a league from it, I found plenty round the hill, as also handsome rounded pebbles

and small calcareous stones, to which sulphurous particles of a prismatic form adhered.

After having visited this species of Solfatara, I passed over another marsh of mangroves, contiguous to the former. Near this second marsh is another hillock: it has not so many vents as the preceding, but its top presents a circular cavity, somewhat shallow, and full of a boiling liquid, having the taste of alum. A dull and subterraneous sound is heard, and while on the spot the earth trembled under our feet. Two poles which I drove forcibly into the crater, disappeared in an instant.

Recovered from my weariness, I again visited very attentively the second hillock. Near its vents, and among the sand, I found some fine crystals of sulphate of copper, incrusting in the alum: not far from thence, returning to the shore, I found in the sand some laminated gypsum, the *frauneis* of Werner.

The colonists who inhabit the neighbourhood of this pretended volcanic crater, assured me unanimously, that every year, in the month of March, they hear several detonations, the noise of which resembles that of a cannon at a distance. This crater is encompassed with marshes of mangroves which communicate with the sea.\*

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\* Near Carthage, there are little cones which have openings on their tops. Those openings are full of water, through which pass bubbles of azotic gas.



In 1801 I discovered schistous plumbago ; near which is a mine of sea-coal, from whence petroleum exudes to the foot of the hill occupied by the Mission of Monserrat, at a distance of about two leagues from the sea.

*Mountains.*

The Island of Trinidad has a range of mountains to the north, a group of hills to the south, and another in the centre, of which the most elevated point is called Mount Tamana, supposed to be the highest in the island. It is very difficult to penetrate through those of the centre and south, owing to the prickly palms (*Mauricia aculeata*,) thorns and points of other trees. There is a small lake near the top of Tamana. A sportsman assured me that its water is salt, but I do not warrant the truth of his account.

During the time I resided in this island, I was never able to procure good instruments for measuring the heights of its mountains: yet according to some barometrical observations, which I am far from considering exact, I believe that the most elevated of the northern mountains is about three thousand feet above the level of the sea.

The highest summits of the northern range are near the sea. Those mountains, as well as the coast range of Cumana, differ from the Caribbean Islands or Lesser Antilles, in many respects, par-

ticularly their form, position, the openings of their vallies, and constitutive principles.

The mountains of Grenada, St. Lucia, Martinico, Dominica, Guadaloupe, St. Christopher, and other Caribbean Islands, which I have visited, are all situated in the centre of those islands, and their chain declines as they approach the sea. Those islands and their mountains affect a direction of east and west, whilst the Apalachian run from N. N. W. to S. S. W. The nucleus of the Caribbean mountains, wherever I have been able to judge from their sides when washed bare by the sea, has appeared to be granite surmounted with prismatic basalt. The basalts of Grenada are the best characterized. There, as every where else, this rock rises in twin mountains, of which the tops are truncated. Those mountains are of an order equally superior to those of Trinidad, by their constituent principles and elevations. All these islands have volcanoes, either in activity or extinguished.

It is worthy of remark that the earthquakes which were felt so violently in Guadaloupe and Antilles, on the night between the 26th and 27th of September, 1797, were not perceived either at Trinidad or in the province of Cumana; but when, some time afterwards, violent earthquakes desolated that province, they were felt, though slightly, at Trinidad, but not in the Antilles.

When, in 1799 and 1800, I formed geological comparisons between Trinidad and the Caribbean



Islands, I merely intended to have ascertained the facts according to the ingenious theory of Doctor Hutton, so ably defended by the learned Playfair. But when I began to reflect independently of all system, the Antilles appeared to me as being volcanic, whilst Trinidad and Tobago, on the contrary, seemed Neptunian, and more recently risen from the waters, as well as the coast mountains of Cumana, of which they are only a continuation.

A treatise of M. de Humboldt, entitled "Fragments of a Geological Table of South America," inserted in a French periodical journal, came into my possession at Trinidad, about the end of 1806. I soon after undertook a voyage to the provinces of the Orinoco, New Andalusia and Cumana; and having traversed those countries with M. Humboldt's treatise in my hand, the greater part of my ideas were changed.

Every thing denotes that Trinidad and Tobago are merely an amputation of the left bank of the Orinoco, and that this separation has been caused by an irruption of the sea. The same strata of earth, the same rocks, fossils, vegetables and animals are peculiar to both regions.

The chain of mountains in the north of Trinidad runs east and west; which is the direction of the mountains on the coast of Cumana. I have already said that the most elevated summits are those of the mountains nearest the sea: their nucleus is a very dense argillaceous schistus.

This schistus becomes lamellated, and the more

friable as it is exposed to the air. I observed that the inferior layers, and those near the beds of rivers, change to micaceous schistus. The rivers which have their sources in the northern chain, and that run towards the north, pass over beds of this schistus, in the interstices of which are found a great quantity of sulphureous pyrites in cubic chrystals.

The schistous chain of Paria and Cumana, parallel to the granitic chain of the Caribbean Islands, is thus co-ordinate to the system of Pallas, who believed he had observed that granitic are always bordered with schistous mountains. M. de Humboldt had observed long since, that there exists a certain regularity in the inclination and direction of the strata, that this inclination never depends on the exterior inequalities of the soil, and that the layers are oftenest parallel to a very distant chain of mountains.

The observations of this learned man on the Andes, on the schistous mountains of Cumana, Cuba, St. Domingo and Jamaica, when compared to the direction of the Caribbean islands, properly so called, and the Apalachian, show that he saw through a most curious law of nature.

The mountain of Las Cuevas is the place where the geological constitution of Trinidad can best be studied. On one of the first steps of the amphitheatre, upon which Fort Abercrombie is situated, the waves have hollowed out a kind of cavern. The stone which I detached from it at the water's



edge, is amphibolic schistus, very pure and handsome, similar to that with which the streets of San Thomé de Angostura are paved. On this basis repose the strata of argillaceous schistus on which is superimposed a layer of more than twenty feet of quartzose gravel, and at last the vegetative earth.

I have often been in canoes the whole length of the coast, from Point Galera as far as Port Spain, but I never observed the hornblende schistus, except at the foot of the mountain of Las Cuevas and on a level with the sea. In other places there was only to be seen at the entrances of the vallies a quartzose free stone in strata, broken and heaped up in those spots most battered by the waves. Many of these pieces of quartz contain magnetic iron. Though the sea throws a great many madrepores on the shore, they have not formed banks, at least so far as I could discover. I do not think the true coral exists on this part of the South American coast.

Las Cuevas with its two summits form four delightful vallies, watered by numerous rivulets. The valley at the north-east bears the name of Las Cuevas. Between the two tops is a noble platform, and the most singular position in the island. When you reach the summit the sea is seen both to the east and west. From this platform there are descents to the vallies of St. Joseph and Santa Cruz to the south-west, and into those of Las Cuevas and Maraccas to the

north-east. In those four vallies, and their mountains, the geological composition of the country may be observed with precision, because their sides are in many instances washed bare by cascades and torrents. It was on the above platform, ornamented with shrubby heather, that M. de la Barrere and myself found the yew tree described in a former chapter.

The precipitous sides of the mountains, washed by those torrents, present in certain places layers of a coarse argile, mixed with ferruginous sand.

Though granite is never seen in any part of this island, Tobago, or in the interior of the continent, from the mouth of the Orinoco to Cape de Paria, there is not a hundred paces of the spaces between the bottom of the vallies to the summit of the mountains, in which may not be found blocks of milky quartz, of different sizes, and in the cracks of which beautiful pieces of rock chrystal are not seen: indeed I never saw so much of it, in an equal space as at this place. Those scattered quartz may derive their origin either from the veins of quartz, which in all countries traverse the argillaceous schistus, or the destroyed granitic mountains. I have often made excavations under those blocks of quartz, when they were too large to be moved, and I frequently found that they concealed a light layer of sulphate of lime. No doubt that at Trinidad, Tobago, and the coast of Paria, the granite is hidden by the sea, and that it serves



for a basis, as in the rest of South America, to schistus and other more recent formations. It is found at various distances on the coast, in isolated rocks, between the mouth of the Orinoco and that of the Amazons.

In passing along the sea coast, going from Cedar Point to the asphaltum lake, considerable masses of pulverating feldspar are found on a rising ground, washed by the rains, near the mouth of the river Guapo, and on its left bank. This feldspar appears to be similar to that which M. Faujas de Saint Fond shows in his lectures, and which was found in the environs of Mans, on the Alençon road.

I have already said that gypsum and limestone are very rare in Trinidad and Tobago, though the great chain of the Bergantin and Guacharo is all calcareous. In Trinidad I know of only one quarry of calcareous carbonate, situated at the foot of a hill near Port Spain, on leaving the town to go to St. Joseph's; but that rock is mixed with heterogeneous substances, among which I found veins of silex.

Some quarries of pure calcareous carbonate are found in the vallies of the coast chain at Guyra, within the gulf, and sulphate of lime at Rio Carupano, in the neighbourhood of the copper mines. I believe there are some also in the hills which command the town of Cumana. It is probable the soil may conceal others in places where I have not been able to discover them.

Reiterated and laborious researches which I made in the mountains of the north, and in the hills of the south and center, have not enabled me to discover any vestiges of organic bodies; but I have found them in its plains, as well as in those of Tobago and in the vallies of the maritime range of Cumana. There, sea shells are intermingled and confounded with those of fresh water, and many are of unknown and extinct species.

This absence of calcareous mountains, and even of considerable masses of that substance, is one of the geological characteristics by which Trinidad, Tobago, and the chain of Cumana differ essentially from the Antilles or Caribbean Islands which have calcareous rocks, and even mountains in strata, in which are found various kinds of agglomerated and petrified shells.

Of all these calcareous rocks, the most remarkable and worthy of fixing the attention of naturalists, is a bank of carbonate of lime, rather hard, on the sea shore, in the district of Moule in Guadeloupe.

This calcareous bank is on a level with the sea, and covered at high water. General Ernouf having heard that it contained human skeletons, sent towards the end of 1804, M. Gerard, a naturalist of Brussels, to make excavations there. He extracted a block from it, in which was found a human skeleton perfectly encrusted in the stone, and completely identified with it. I was in Guadeloupe at that period, and ordered workmen



to dig there for my own account: I could not obtain an entire skeleton, but heads, arms, legs, and fragments of the dorsal spine. With a sufficient number of workmen, I might have obtained complete skeletons, and more accurately delineated than that of M. Gerard.\* There are several parts of his skeleton, of which the lineaments cannot be clearly distinguished without the assistance of a magnifying glass. I remarked that all those anthropolites are placed east and west, according to the ancient custom of the Asiatics and Americans. By the side of the skeletons were found pestles, mortars, hatchets, clubs of a basaltic or porphyritic stone, and instruments similar to those which the savages still use. Those instruments are petrified. But I found no trace nor the smallest vestige of organic bodies, though there are banks of madrepores quite near them.

The reader will not, I hope, accuse me of deviating from my subject, to notice this calcareous rock in Guadaloupe. My principal object in describing the maritime range of Cumana, has been to point out the difference which exists between the geological constitution of that chain, and

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\* One of these skeletons has been lately deposited in the British Museum, which begins to assume a degree of importance, that renders it worthy of a great nation; and with the exception of the few facilities afforded to those who may be desirous of profiting by the library, it is certainly conducted upon a very liberal principle.—ED.

those of the Antilles. If I have not accomplished my purpose so ably as might have been done by learned geologists, it will not, I trust, be denied that I am the first who observed and attempted to explain this difference.

I have said that no granite is found in Trinidad, or the neighbouring countries. On the surface of the soil of this island, pebbles rounded in the rivers which run in the vallies are found; but, arriving in the plain, there are no more of them to be seen. Those rivers have scarcely any descent, and run slowly across large plains of argillaceous and vegetative earth. All that immense plain situated between the Amazons and Orinoco, known by the name of Lower Guiana, is equally destitute of stones and rounded pebbles, though it is watered by very large rivers, such as the Surinam, Essequibo, Demerara, &c. The modest, learned, and too little known Alexander Anderson, of St. Vincent's, told me that he had ascended the Demerara two hundred English miles, without meeting a single rock or rounded pebble on its banks. The first stone which offered itself to his observation was an immense pier of granite, that forms one of the cataracts of that river.

I have every reason to believe that this island has no mines of precious metals; but the sight and the magnet discover iron in the greater part of its rocks and pebbles. All the colonists consider the gold dust mentioned by Sir Walter Raleigh as a fable. In spite of all the pains I took for



ascertaining that fact, I could not discover one atom of gold, silver, or platina, and the Spanish government searched in vain for them during two centuries.

An inhabitant of Port Spain once brought me a piece of very heavy stone, which he said he had found in the river when collecting pebbles for building. It was not necessary to examine it long to discover that it was arsenic with sulphurated barytes for matrix. I went the next day to where it was found, but all the searches I made did not procure me a bit of that metal.

Though my taste for natural history induced me to make many excursions near the crater of Erin, the most painful and persevering researches there, did not enable me to discover any other metallic substance than some crystals of sulphate of copper, encrusted with alum and among flints. Yet a person in the service of government showed me a metal that he pretended to have found there, and which he supposed to be silver. I did not see this specimen in its matrix: with great difficulty I obtained a piece that weighed rather more than two ounces. This metal is of a very brilliant white: its specific gravity is ten: melted with gold, it deprives it of malleability and ductility, and produces the same effect on silver; at least unless there be three parts of silver for one of this metal. It appeared to a goldsmith who made experiments on it with me, that in this proportion it did not diminish the malleability of silver. It is

not, however, very brittle. According to the pyrometer of Wedgwood, it requires two or three degrees more of heat to melt this substance than silver.

M. Vauquelin, with whom I communicated on this subject, thinks it either a new metal or one composed of several others.



## CHAP. VI.

CLIMATE.—Seasons.—Winds.—Rain.—Rarity of Storms and Hurricanes.—State of the Thermometer.—An Experiment.—Quantity of Rain.—Inundation of the Orinoco.—TIDES.—Effects of increased Cultivation.—Various Degrees of Heat.—Observations on the Effects of Climate, and Precautions recommended.—Spring or fine Season.—Remarks.—Dews.

COUNTRIES situated between the tropics have only two seasons: the dry and rainy; or the spring and winter. These two seasons are still more distinct at Trinidad than in the Antilles; for whatever may be the winds that prevail in that island, there scarcely ever falls a drop of rain during the spring. This is the name given in those regions to that part of the year which commences with the month of November, and concludes with that of April or the beginning of May. From the end of April the heat increases gradually; the east, north-east and northerly winds become less cool; at the end of June the heat is greatest; the storms commence, and increase in frequency until the months of August, September, and the beginning of October, when they occur daily, and are accompanied with torrents of rain. Nothing is

more curious for an European, than the manner in which a storm forms in this climate. The air is calm, not a zephyr agitates it; Reaumur's thermometer is in the shade, at twenty-three, twenty-four, or twenty-five degrees, ascending as the atmosphere is more calm. The sky is clear, azure, and without a cloud. Suddenly there is seen forming in one part of the heavens a small grey point, which, in four or five minutes increases and becomes a large black cloud; at first lightnings issue from this cloud; those soon become more considerable; a minute afterwards the barometer descends suddenly one or two lines; the thunder rolls, and in an instant a torrent of rain falls in large drops. Those showers generally last only a few minutes, seldom half an hour; scarcely has the rain ceased, than the atmosphere remains as calm, and the sky as serene as before. It rains thus fifteen or twenty times a day during the winter, and a moment afterwards, it scarcely seems that there had been rain. There is seldom any fall of rain in the night, but a heavy shower without wind usually precedes sunrise by half an hour, during the season.

I have very rarely observed in the atmosphere of Trinidad, and the countries of the sea-coast, between the left bank of the Orinoco and the vallies of Cumana and Caraccas, that conflict of winds and clouds so remarkable in the turbulent climate of the Antilles and the Gulf of Mexico, when, during



the winter, the westerly winds chasing and overturning the inferior clouds, against their usual course, producing those gusts of wind which have so often desolated that archipelago. Hurricanes are unknown in Trinidad, Tobago, and the adjacent continent.

It is very remarkable that Grenada, the most southward of the Antilles, and only thirty leagues from the continent, is as much subject to squalls of wind as the other Antilles. It is equally singular that the island of Tobago, which, like Trinidad, is situated to the east of the coast range, has never experienced a hurricane.

The barometer varies, in the eastern part of the island, from twenty-seven inches ten lines to twenty-eight inches; and in the western part, where the atmosphere is still more regular, these variations are not sure indications of fine or bad weather. However, a violent storm coming from the south or south-west, is generally announced by a sudden fall of several lines. I have already said that the heat constantly increases from the end of April to the month of June, and that it remains almost stationary from that month until the middle of October, also that it begins to diminish simultaneously with the storms and rains.

I made use of Fahrenheit's thermometer: it stood usually during that season, at Port Spain, in the morning before sunrise, at  $78^{\circ}$  to  $80^{\circ}$ ; from

sunrise to sunset at  $84^{\circ}$  to  $86^{\circ}$ ; in the evening it generally fell to  $82^{\circ}$ ; sometimes, when the weather was very stormy in the months of August and September, and the air was saturated with humidity, it rose as high as  $90^{\circ}$ . In the space of nine years I have seen it only twice at  $93^{\circ}$ , which was the 2d of September, 1798, and the 21st of October, 1799, days on which earthquakes were felt.

When during winter there is wind with the rain during the night, the mornings are less hot, and whenever the rain is preceded by violent claps of thunder during the day, which is generally the case in that season, the evenings are not so hot. When the rain is neither preceded by thunder nor followed by wind, the atmosphere is heavy and the heat violent. Finally, in a few leagues circumference, the heat varies several degrees, according to the elevation of the place above the level of the sea, and its exposure: this difference is especially perceptible in the spring.

The hygrometrical constitution of Trinidad experiences great variations from one season to another. During the rainy season, the hygrometer is usually between  $85^{\circ}$  and  $90^{\circ}$ ; but in the spring it remains generally between  $36^{\circ}$  and  $38^{\circ}$  in the day time, and  $50^{\circ}$  at night.

There falls at Trinidad annually on an average about sixty-two inches of water during the winter, and about eight or nine inches in the spring,



including the dews\*; for it scarcely ever rains from the end of December until the end of May. Having said that the rains diminish with the storms and the heat, from the end of October, I should add that those October rains are very gentle; in November, when the cool season begins, they become every day less frequent and more slight. From the end of December until the beginning of June, of some years, there does not fall a drop of water during the day.

The old people in Trinidad assert that it rained much more previous to the year 1783, in which the draining and clearing the lands commenced. It is certain that the river San Joseph, which runs into the Caroni, was navigable thirty years ago, as far as below the town. And I, who frequented or inhabited the island for about fifteen years, have remarked that the rivers which run towards the west, had much less water in 1806 than in 1791, whilst those of the east and

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\* Struck with the quantity of dew that falls every night at Trinidad, in December, 1799, I placed on a plank, in my savanna, fifty sponges each night, from the 2d of December to the 1st of May, 1800; every morning I wrung out the water which had been absorbed by the sponges, and I caused to be evaporated in a cucurbite what might have remained in them. I put this water in large bottles, and emptied it from time to time into the bucket which served for measuring the rain; and I believe, as did also a person who assisted me to make this experiment, however clumsy it was, that the dew which had fallen in those five months, was equal to six inches of rain.

north appear not to be diminished; no doubt because the clearing and cultivation have not destroyed the forests there, as in the western parts.

The vicinity of the humid continent of Guiana explains why the falls of rain are as great at Trinidad as in Martinico, Guadaloupe, and the greater part of the Antilles, which have rather large mountains in all their length, the direction of which seems to have been regulated according to the predominant winds, and whose pointed summits act as conductors to the atmospheric electricity attracting its vapours. Trinidad, on the contrary, has a chain of mountains but little elevated, on its northern coast, a group of hills towards the center, and a chain of downs on the south-west coast. The tops of those hills are flat or rounded, though generally their sides are more steep than those of the mountains of Martinico and the Caribbean Islands.

With the rainy season begins the inundation of the Orinoco, which continues increasing from the end of April to the end of August. In September its waters are at their greatest height: it has then risen from thirty-nine to forty-one feet above its level when the waters are lowest. Its banks are covered, and the chief part of the Guaraouns islets are immersed. In October the river begins to decrease regularly, until the month of March, when its waters are at the lowest ebb; those fluctuations are regular and invariable.



“ During the five months in which the increase of the river continues,” says Raynal, “ the hemisphere of the new world presents seas only, and scarcely any land to the perpendicular action of the sun’s rays : during the six months following the decrease of the river, the immense continent of America alone presents itself to the same action ; the sea is then less subject to the active influence of the sun, or its movement to the eastern side is counter-balanced and interrupted in a greater degree by the land ; it ought, in consequence, to leave a greater liberty to the course of rivers, which in that case, not being so much counter-acted by the sea, can be increased only by the melting of the snow on the Southern Cordilleras, or by the rains. It is, perhaps, also the increase of the rains which determines that of the Orinoco, as Gumila, who seems to have observed this phenomenon, attentively supposes. When an enlightened nation,” continues Raynal, “ shall have studied the shores of the Orinoco, the phenomenon of its increase will be investigated as it deserves to be.”

It appears to me that this phenomenon might be explained in a most satisfactory manner. The rains are not the first and only cause of the increase of the Orinoco ; it increases obviously before the commencement of the rains, and the melting of the snows in the Cordilleras of Bogota, and the ranges of mountains proceeding from them, is no doubt the principal cause.

*Tides.*

The tides are neither very perceptible or regular on the coast from Cape de Paria, outside the gulf which bears that name, to Cape de la Vela. This is not the case in going from Cape de Paria towards the mouth of the Amazons. I have not been able to make observations sufficiently exact and minute, to determine the height of the tides and their periods. Still the configuration of the coasts, and the resistance which they oppose to the sea, and the waters which run in the immense rivers of South America, greatly modify the action of the tides. They rise to six or seven feet in the Gulf of Paria during the equinoxes; and in the same times, the Guarapiche may be ascended from the Horquetta as far as San Bonifacio, by aid of a tide that raises the water as much as six feet. But at San Thomé de Angostura, on the Orinoco, the tide scarcely rises ten inches.

M. de Humboldt depicts the dry season as a horrible time in Guiana, and the commencement of the rainy season as the regeneration of nature. His "Pictures of Nature," written with energy and eloquence, should be read in order to form an idea of the return of vegetable nature on the recurrence of the rains; when a kind of resurrection of crocodiles and monstrous reptiles seems to take place. The anxiety and ardour with which multitudes of horses, oxen, wild asses and ferocious animals come panting from the burning



desart, to quench their thirst on the return of the rains is truly singular. I have seen those animals bound and plunge into the marshes with so much avidity, and drink such a quantity of water, that from an appearance of extreme leanness, they seemed to become as it were dropsical, and died floating on the water in a few hours.

The effect is, however, different in some parts of Guiana : in those which are fanned and refreshed by the sea breezes, the dry season or spring is a delightful period, while, on the contrary, the rainy season is hotter and less healthy. Such is the climate of Cayenne, Surinam, Berbice, Demerara, Essequibo, of the countries situated between this river and the Orinoco, and from the Orinoco, continuing along the coast, as far as the lake or Mediterranean of Maracaybo. Before Dutch Guiana, and Demerara were cleared, says Bolingbroke, who has given a very interesting description of those places, torrents of rain used to fall. Since cultivation has increased the seasons are more regular, and the rains less abundant. They have two wet and two dry seasons. The first take place during December, January and February, afterwards in June, July, and August. The rest of the year composes the dry seasons. In the rainy season the thermometer is in general lower than in the others. The land winds prevail, and are deemed unwholesome; musquitos fill the apartments and are very annoying ; to such a degree, indeed, that the planter who clears a new planta-

tion, is obliged to live in smoke, in order to obtain some repose at night: the sting of those insects and their buzzing are insupportable, while the remedy of the smoke is no less so. It is known that by burning camphor most insects are destroyed: it was in Sweden this experiment was first tried. Perhaps that drug ought to be substituted, or some other vapour equally destructive. The dry season, says the same writer, in speaking of the colonies of Demerara and Essequibo, is most beautiful; an azure sky continues the whole day, and at the east even from four o'clock in the morning, occasioned by a slow and gradual twilight. In the evening at six o'clock the sun sets in an instant, and leaves the whole country in sudden darkness. This difference, which is very striking, proceeds probably from the sun rising over the sea, where its rays traverse a humid and very cooling atmosphere, whilst, on the contrary, it sets behind high mountains, the shadow of which has defined limits. The greatest heat, which is from seven to ten o'clock in the morning, can hardly be borne: at ten o'clock the sea breeze commences, and restores nature to life: it increases until evening, and diminishes towards ten o'clock at night.

It is in the month of August that the hurricanes begin in the West Indies, but Guiana is little exposed to that scourge; it is there limited to a few gusts of wind, which merely overthrow some fields of plantains or bananas. Clouds accumulate



to the south, thunder roars, and towards the close of the day some lightnings flash in the horizon to the south or south-westward.

The length of the days is thirteen hours, and increases to fourteen. Little variation is observed during the year; otherwise the climate presents more variety than might be supposed. During the dry season, which is considered the warmest, the thermometer, near the sea, varies from  $84^{\circ}$  to  $90^{\circ}$  of Farenheit. Twenty miles in the interior, at the hottest time of the year, it seldom passes  $80^{\circ}$ , and at night it descends to  $50^{\circ}$  or  $60^{\circ}$ .

The mornings are extremely cool, and accompanied with very heavy dews. This circumstance, joined to the stagnant waters and marshy plains, renders the interior of the country very insalubrious to Europeans. The natives, on the contrary, by the effect of habit, enjoy very good health, and are subject to few diseases. This climate has often been called unhealthy, but I have not found it so. In the excursions that I made by water to Essequibo and Berbice, where business required my presence, I have been frequently wetted through, even three times in twenty-four hours, and have suffered my clothes to dry on me, without experiencing any injury. It is not that I would advise new comers to repeat this experiment; necessity alone obliged me to expose myself to it, but temperance is the best preservative. It is indispensable, and ought to be recommended to all those who arrive in the West Indies, to take

some cooling medicines, also to avoid carefully the fogs, the night air, and above all the sun, which gives a fever to those who expose themselves to it incautiously.

Such are the climate and temperature of Guiana, or that immense tract of country situated between the Orinoco and Amazons. From the left bank of the Orinoco, as far as Cape de la Vela, (a rugged and mountainous country,) the climate is more varied, and more or less cool, according to the elevation of the places; damp, hot and unhealthy in the narrow vallies, where there are stagnant waters; hot, dry and very salubrious in plains watered by rapid rivers: such is, in general, the climate of Cumana, the Egypt of South America.

The climate of Trinidad differs from that of those two countries, to which it serves as a kind of limit, inasmuch as it is less moist than Guiana, and not so dry as Cumana. Being an island, the winds are more constant, and renew its atmosphere continually.

The winter or rainy season begins there, as already stated, in June, and ends in October as in all the islands of the Caribbean sea. But there is very little rain, sometimes none, in June, though the return of the heat is invariable from the end of May. With November begins the delightful season: it is then that the east and northeasterly winds blow: those currents of air come from the cold regions of North America, probably because the laws of equilibrium require that the



cold and dense air of the north should fill the place left for it by the dilation of the hot and light air of the tropics. During this spring the thermometer is usually, in the day time, at 80 degrees of Fahrenheit, and during the night it falls to 60°, and sometimes even to 50° in tolerably elevated spots. There are many charming situations at Trinidad, where even during winter, the thermometer seldom rises in the day higher than 82°, falling to 70° in the night. Such are the hills or elevations situated at the opening of the vallies watered by rapid rivers, and where there is constantly a current of fresh air. The vallies of Santa Anna, of Maraval, Diego Martin, Aricagua, and the heights of St. Joseph to the north-west, as also the vallies on the northern coast, enjoy a very mild temperature. Those who have the advantage of inhabiting houses built on the hills, at the opening of a valley, breathe during almost the whole year a fresh, pure, and very elastic air.

The effects produced by the simultaneous action of the evaporation of rains, dews and winds, is the great source of this coolness; the animal body which perspires, and the body surrounded with aqueous vapours, whether naturally or artificially, experiences a lesser degree of heat than the thermometer which neither transpires nor evaporates.

For instance, when the thermometer marks 80° and even 84° of Fahrenheit, let dinner be served in

a room well aired, the meat will be cool in an instant: when, at the same moment, if the thermometer be surrounded by gas imbibed with water, it will in some minutes after descend two, three, and four degrees, according to the proportion of coolness in the prevailing wind.

It is according to this principle that very cold liquids are obtained by suspending the bottles in bags saturated with water, in a current of air, also by putting water into small vessels of half baked lay.

It should not therefore be supposed that in the tropical climates, bodies experience the same degree of heat as in Europe, in an equal degree to what the thermometer marks. In those climates bodies transpire more freely from the above-mentioned causes, and consequently disengage a greater quantity of animal heat. I have perceived in my own person that I felt much less heat, after I had adopted the custom of wearing flannel waistcoats next my skin. The gradual perspiration they maintain, and the coolness produced by that perspiration, are some of the surest means of preserving health in a climate, of which Europeans who have not resided in it form very false notions.

There is no country in the world which presents a more healthy old age than the Antilles, or any that is more exempt from gout, sciatica, loss of senses or the faculties, together with the dismal train of physical evils incident to cold climates.



*Dews.*

The abundant dews which fall every night in Trinidad, are the principal cause of the great variations in the hygrometer. A part of them is, no doubt, produced by the waters of the island and the surrounding sea ; but it is the adjacent continent of Guiana, its marshes, and great rivers, which refresh the island with these abundant dews. Trinidad is generally without rain, from December until the end of June. Still, during that season, the vegetables are every morning soaked with water, as if there had been refreshing rain. Without this beneficent dew, the island would be sterile, and its climate excessively hot. The ground, which is found in constant effervescence, communicates a vigour to vegetation, raises large trees to a great height, and gives them a luxuriance of which no description can afford a just idea to the European who has not visited those regions.

The most beautiful part of the southern celestial hemisphere, which comprehends the Centaur, Argo, and Cross, is always hidden from the inhabitants of Europe. It is only under the equator that the magnificent spectacle is to be enjoyed, of seeing at the same time all the stars of the two celestial hemispheres. Some of our northern constellations, such as the Great and Little Bear, on account of their depth in the horizon, appear of an astonishing size.

## CHAP. VII.

HISTORICAL Sketch of Trinidad.—Its Discovery.—First Establishment of the Spaniards.—Sir Walter Raleigh's Visit to the Island.—His Treaty with the Indians, and Attack on San Joseph.—Eulogium on the Soil and Climate of VENEZUELA.—Blind Policy of Spain.—Project of M. de Saint Laurent.—Change in the Island's Condition.—Rapid Increase of its Population.—Don Joseph Chacon.—His Policy.—Port Spain.—French Refugees.—Inhabitants in 1797.—First Sugar Plantation.—Capture of the Island by SIR RALPH ABERCROMBIE.—Progressive State of Population, Agriculture, and Commerce between 1783 and 1807.

THE Island of Trinidad was discovered by Christopher Columbus, on the 31st July, 1498, and during his third voyage to the new world. According to some historians he gave it the name of Trinidad, whilst he was yet distant thirteen leagues to the south-east of it, from the three tops of mountains which are seen in that situation at sea; and according to Herrera he named it thus in honour of the Holy Trinity.

Nevertheless this island did not fix the attention of the Spaniards until the close of the sixteenth century, if an historical monument preserved in the church of St. Josef de Oruña may be believed. According to this chronicle, it appears that they preceded their establishment in the



commencement of the year 1588, by the almost general destruction of the Indians. Most of those who escaped the proscription, found a slower and more horrible fate in the works of the mines. Some, however, owed their lives to the paternal and courageous care of the apostle of the new world, the virtuous Las Casas.

The labours of the Indians soon fertilized the land of which they had been masters for the benefit of their conquerors. Some negroes were afterwards taken there, and united in the work of the natives.

Sir Walter Raleigh, who visited Trinidad when attracted by the chimera of El Dorado in 1593, relates that the inhabitants then cultivated excellent tobacco and the sugar cane. The Spaniards assured him, that the rivers were full of gold dust.\*

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\* It seems that Raleigh, who in common with all the historians of his day was fond of the marvellous, believed in the absurd fable of El Dorado, and perhaps ashamed of being laughed at on his return, he was determined to present the government and people of England with some story, which should give a colour of probability to the existence of such a place, hence the wonders related about the capital of Guyana.

“The empire of Guyana,” observes Sir Walter, “is directly to the eastward of Peru towards the sea: it is situated under the equinoctial line, and possesses more gold than any part of Peru. It has more great cities than Peru ever had in its most flourishing state. This country is governed by the same laws: the emperor and the people profess the same religion; the same police and form of government which were observed in Peru, without any difference whatever. Such of the Spaniards as have

On his return to Trinidad from exploring the Orinoco, Sir Walter Raleigh made a treaty with the savages, who were then mortal enemies of the

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seen Manoa, the capital city of Guyana, which the Spaniards call El Dorado, assert that, by size, riches and admirable situation, it surpasses all the cities in the world, known to the Spanish nation. It is built in a lake of salt-water, of about two hundred leagues in length, very similar to the Caspian sea: if we compare this capital to that of Peru, and refer, in regard to the latter, to the accounts of Francisco Lopez and others, this recital appears to us very probable."

The picture drawn by Captain Dudley, who ascended the Orinoco still higher than his companions, is no less flattering, though perhaps infinitely nearer the truth. "On climbing the hills nearest the banks," says he, "we contemplated that astonishing mass of waters which falls into the Caroni, and observed how it divides itself into three portions at more than twenty miles distance. Ten or twelve falls presented themselves one above the other, each the height of a steeple, dashing and dispersing, by the breaking of the waters, a thin rain around, which we at first mistook for the smoke of a great city.

"I have never seen a more beautiful country, or views so picturesque: hills rose from the bosoms of vallies; the river meandered over the plain in many branches. There were to be seen vast plains free from woods, a green and thick grass, a soil of firm sand convenient for walking on foot, or riding; deer running along the paths under our eyes; the birds towards evening filling the air with their various warblings; storks and herons, some white, and others crimson or scarlet, wandered over the banks of the river; the air was refreshed by the blowing of the easterly wind. Every pebble that we picked up, appeared to promise us, by its colour, mines of gold and silver." (See Hakluyt's Collection, Vol. III. Quarto Edition.) The foregoing picture is by no means exaggerated, according to all the accounts received from those who have lately proceeded to San Thomé de Angostura by water.—Ed.



Spaniards, and marched with them against the town of St. Josef, which was the seat of government. He took the fort by assault, put the garrison of thirty men to the sword, and made a prisoner of Berreo, the governor, who he represents as a man of noble birth, but detested by the Indians.

But that which is neither fabulous or romantic, is the beauty of the climate, its fine rivers, and enchanting situations ; a gigantic and magnificent vegetation, compared to which the largest trees in Europe would appear stunted shrubs, and our most beautiful flowers seem languishing and faded ; that earth so fruitful, where the children of nature gather without labour the most succulent and nourishing roots and exquisite fruits, whilst the forests, rivers and sea present them with abundant and solid food. Such is the true natural riches of nearly all the country situated between the Amazons and Orinoco, also of Trinidad, which is the same in miniature.

The Jesuit Gumilla pretends, it is true, that the land had become sterile, since the inhabitants refused to pay tythes. But, fortunately, that sterility never existed, except in the imagination of the Jesuit ; and those who have written on this island after him, speak with delight of the fertility of its soil, its forests of palm, cocoa-nut and cocoa trees, of its hedges of citrons and lemons. Its beautiful sky, added to the fecundity of the soil, has justly obtained for it the name of the Indian Paradise.

The neglect of the mother country was more fatal to the colony ~~emigrant~~ danger of the monks. Either the Spanish government did not know the value of this possession, or affairs of greater importance occupied its attention, for it paid none whatever to this island. Its population and trade were almost extinguished. In short, about thirty years ago, the colony only contained a few hundred inhabitants, Creoles, Mulattos, and Indians. All its trade consisted in barter of cocoa and indigo for coarse cloths and implements of agriculture, which were brought to it by the smugglers of St. Eustatia. When circumstances caused it to rise from this state of languor, in 1783, a planter named Saint Laurent, who resided in Grenada, visited Trinidad from a taste for natural history, and perhaps also from his restless and enterprising disposition. If the fertility of the soil, the abundance and variety of the vegetables of the island charmed him, he was no less struck with the political importance of its situation, which, by means of a few troops might secure to its possessor the exclusive trade of the vast territory bordering on the Orinoco.

Full of this idea, and of the hope of making a large fortune, Saint Laurent resolved to enlighten the Spanish government as to its true interests. He went to Madrid in consequence, saw the ministers, and succeeded in fixing their attention on Trinidad. It must, however, be allowed, that the political events of which the



new world had recently been the theatre, contributed not a little to the success of his project.

The revolution in North America, terminating in a glorious peace, had given a dreadful lesson to parent states. They feared that other colonies would imitate that example; and those fears were felt, above all, by the court of Madrid, whose colonial system was a masterpiece of tyranny and oppression.

However it might have been, the Council of Indies occupied itself seriously with the plans of Saint Laurent; it relieved the colonies from several obstacles which embarrassed their agriculture and commerce; and Trinidad, so long neglected by the government, was treated like a favourite child.

An edict issued from that council in 1783, permitted all foreigners professing the Roman Catholic religion, to establish themselves in this colony. It protected at the same time, for a period of five years, those new inhabitants from debts contracted in the countries they had quitted. It invited, in short, all the traders and navigators of the nations which were at peace with Spain, to frequent the island, placing but a few restrictions on its commerce, which could be easily eluded.

Saint Laurent visited the principal commercial cities of France and Spain at his own expence, to induce the merchants to make advances to the colonists of Trinidad. He even persuaded many

persons who led the most inactive lives at Bourdeaux and Paris, to emigrate to that island with their property, and nearly all those who followed his advice, have become wealthy proprietors.

Spain was not long in reaping the fruits of this wise measure. Crowds of new colonists were soon seen coming from Europe and the British and French possessions, thus bringing their industry and capitals, also a great number of agents, who, after having dilapidated the plantations they had directed, came to enjoy in this island the fruits of their rapine, by favour of the edict which guaranteed them against any process for five years. It should be remarked that this decree, contrary to the laws of nations, was religiously maintained by the court of Madrid, in spite of the remonstrances and complaints of the British government in 1791.

The inhabitants increased so rapidly, that six years after the publication of the above edict, there were reckoned in this colony two thousand one hundred and fifty-one whites, four thousand four hundred and sixty-seven people of colour, ten thousand one hundred negroes, and two thousand two hundred Indians, which form a total of eighteen thousand six hundred and twenty-seven inhabitants, an unexampled instance of such a prodigious increase in so short a space of time in America.

Still it may be easily conceived that this mixture of people of all nations and colours, contain-



ed the germs of the vilest passions. It was highly necessary that there should be a firm and enlightened government to repress so many immoral beings, and oblige them to contribute to the prosperity of the colony. Spain found a fit person in Don Josef Chacon, a naval captain, who was appointed governor of the island, a short time after the edict was issued, from which its colonization may be dated.

Endowed with more cunning and prudence, than firmness, he joined experience to a complete knowledge of government, and a refined taste for the arts and sciences. The new governor employed his talents with success to fulfil the duties of his office, giving a political and commercial importance to this country, worthy of its geographical position.

Having succeeded in preventing the establishment of the Inquisition in his colony, and sending the monks out of it, in consequence of their dissolute manners and intolerant spirit, which had hindered great numbers from settling in the island, Chacon placed Don Josef Angeles, at the head of his clergy, an enlightened and liberal ecclesiastic, who died of grief, in 1807, a victim to the revenge of his enemies.

Foreigners who visited Trinidad, met the most flattering reception from Chacon: he even took upon himself to give more liberty to commerce than was granted in the edict; and the merchants found both freedom and safety for their specula-

tions under his government. The new colonists received grants of fertile lands, and the governor made them advances from the royal treasure to purchase cattle and implements of husbandry.

This distinguished character, the founder of a colony, was lately a memorable instance of the ingratitude of mankind. He lived in poverty, and on the benefactions of a friend, at an obscure village in Spain; and, strange fatality! sacrificed to the fanatical hatred of some French anarchists, whom he had formerly enriched by his bounty!!

The encouragements granted to commerce and agriculture, soon changed the face of the island; and where a short time before only some miserable huts of fishermen, covered with palm leaves were seen, there arose in the short space of four years, a town regularly built, which by the size and convenience of its port, and the industry of its inhabitants, became one of the most commercial in the new world, justly meriting the name of Port Spain from the mother country.

On the other hand, the disturbances which broke out in the French colonies, at the beginning of the revolution, and the violence of various parties, alternately conquerors and conquered, brought a great number of proprietors from Martinico, Guadaloupe and Saint Lucia to this island, as also many of the ancient French inhabitants of Grenada and Tobago.

Don Josef Chacon took advantage of those events to people his colony: he received with



equal attention all those who brought either capital or industry, without troubling himself about their opinions. Thus, in 1796 and 1797, in consequence of those revolutions which faction alone can explain, this colony presented a mixture of persons of all parties, whose exaggerated principles had clashed reciprocally, and caused their ruin. He who sees with contempt and pity the chimeras for which men destroy each other, will contemplate with satisfaction this community of persons, once ready for mutual immolation, living peaceably under a government that protected them all equally; cementing their union by societies of agriculture or commerce, intermarriages, and giving themselves up with ardour to every branch of industry. All those causes combined, soon carried the colony to the highest degree of prosperity.

In 1787, M. de la Perouse established the first sugar plantation, which was the source of a brilliant fortune for him, and a laudable object of emulation to the other colonists. In 1797, there were one hundred and fifty-nine sugar plantations; of which three had water-mills, one with a wind-mill, and a hundred and fifty-five with mills worked by mules, a hundred and thirty coffee farms, a hundred of cotton, and about sixty with cocoa. There were, besides, some small plantations, the masters of which being poor, but active, occupied themselves in the cultivation of bananas, manioc, yams, sweet potatoes, maize, &c. articles

of great consumption for the country, and the people employed by the great planters, who were wholly engaged in the growth of those commodities destined for the European markets.

Such was the prosperous state of this island, in 1795; when the contentions in Europe, so disastrous for the French colonies, where they were felt more or less calamitously, occasioned an augmentation of prosperity to Trinidad.

On the 16th of February, 1797, a British squadron of four sail of the line, under the orders of Admiral Harvey appeared off the island. The Spanish Rear-admiral Apodaca was anchored at Chagaramus with three superb ships of the line, (one of which was a three-decker,) and a forty gun frigate. As soon as he saw the British ships, he set fire to his own, and *gallantly* retreated to Port Spain, reciting his rosary, and accompanied by a band of priests who followed his example. Arrived at the governor's with his chaplet of beads in his hand: "well, admiral, all is lost, as you have burnt your ships," said Chacon to him. "No, all is not lost," replied the *noblè* admiral; "I have saved the image of San Jago of Campostella, the patron of my ship and myself," taking from his pocket an image of that saint!

General Sir Ralph Abercrombie landed with four thousand men, marched to Port Spain, fired a few discharges of cannon, and after a short conference the governor capitulated.



*Progressive State of the Population, Agriculture, and Commerce of Trinidad, from 1783 to 1807.*

I have said in another page of this chapter, that previous to the decree of 1783, the island only contained a few hundred inhabitants, Creoles, Mulattos, Indians, and Negroes. This population was no more in 1783, than 126 whites, 295 of colour, free, 310 slaves, and 2032 Indians of all ages. Total, 2,763.

Seven years after the edict, in 1790, a new population had formed, of fraudulent bankrupts, and dishonest agents, as well as a small number of estimable families from the French and English colonies, and even European French families, some of whom were of distinguished birth.

The troubles which at this period, 1790, began to desolate the French colonies, contributed to the prosperity of Trinidad, and soon gave it a respectable population. It is principally composed of French colonists, ruined by those troubles, the chief part of them having brought nothing but their industry, and a very small number some wreck of their property. From 1790 to 1797, they increased the population from 10,422 to 18,627 inhabitants.\* In the year pre-

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\* The official statements of the population published by the British government, in 1797, amount only to 17,718 inhabitants; because they were made immediately after an emigration caused by the conquest of the island.

ceding its capture, the following produce was collected :

On 159 sugar plantations, 7,800 hogsheads.

On 130 coffee plantations, 330,000 pounds.

On 60 cocoa plantations, 96,000 pounds.

On 103 cotton plantations, 224,000 pounds.

The tonnage of the shipping employed in this trade, as also in the contraband which the adjacent continent carried on with the island, had been, on an average, from 1784 to 1797, from 7,500 to 8,000 tons.

If it be considered that previous to 1783, the population was only 2,763 individuals, of whom 2,032 were Indians, who never work, except to provide for their greatest wants; that the obstacles and absurd regulations before the epoch of the edict paralyzed the commerce of the Spanish colonies; that before the year 1783, a Dutch house of St. Eustatia carried on all the commerce of the colony, with a vessel of about a hundred and fifty tons, that it sent there two or three times in the year, and which was sufficient for taking all the articles they required to the inhabitants, and for which they gave in payment a small portion of cocoa, vanilla, indigo, arnotto, cotton and maize. When it is also recollected that the first sugar plantation was established there in 1787, an idea may be formed of the prodigious increase of this colony, under the prudent government of Don



Joseph Chacon, in the short space of time comprised between 1783 and 1797, when all the new colonists had made fortunes more or less considerable.

From the conquest of the island, in February, 1797, until the peace of Amiens, in 1802, the population had increased from 18,627 to 24,239 inhabitants, and the cultivation as follows :

On 192 sugar plantations, 15,461 hogsheads.

On 128 coffee plantations, 358,660 pounds.

On 57 cocoa plantations, 97,000 pounds.

On 101 cotton plantations, 263,000 pounds.

Thus it is seen that in the space of five years the cultivation of sugar had almost doubled. There may also be observed a small augmentation in the produce of coffee, cocoa, and cotton, but two coffee, three cocoa and two cotton plantations less: it was because the proprietors of those plantations had found it more profitable to change them into sugar plantations.

In 1802, the tonnage of sixty vessels employed in the commerce of Trinidad, was about fifteen thousand tons. I suspect that the contraband trade formed about two thirds of this commerce; leaving a third of the whole tonnage employed in the trade of the island, five thousand tons.

Now, the tonnage in 1783, being only one hundred and fifty tons, and having increased in 1802, to five thousand tons, it is evident that the produce and resources of the colony had increased

in the proportion of 1 to  $33\frac{1}{2}$ ; and that the population in the same time was augmented in the proportion of 1 to  $8\frac{3}{4}$ .

The emigration which took place from St. Domingo and the British colonies to Trinidad, after the peace of Amiens, had increased its population, in 1807, to thirty-one thousand inhabitants, amongst whom were reckoned TWENTY-ONE THOUSAND SLAVES. There were then two hundred and fourteen sugar plantations, of which nearly one half made scarcely fifty thousand pounds of sugar each, from want of hands; but there were many that made from two to three hundred thousand pounds each. The total quantity of sugar exported that year from the colony to England, Nova Scotia, Canada, and the United States, amounted to 18,235 hogsheads, or 21,234,600 pounds.

There were made besides, in the same year, 1807, 460,000 gallons of rum, 100,000 gallons of syrup,† 500,000 pounds of coffee, 355,000 pounds of cocoa, and 800,000 pounds of cotton. Previous to the rupture of the treaty of Amiens, there were grown annually, on an average, from 1,500,000 to 1,600,000 pounds of cotton. But the ruin of the

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\* The hogsheads which were used in 1802, weighed only about 1200 lbs. each; since then they have been made to contain from 1400 to 1500 each.

† Those syrups are exported to the United States and Canada where they are distilled into rum.



British manufactures having lowered two thirds, and even three fourths, the price of this article, a great number of colonists abandoned the cultivation of it, so much so that in 1810, there were scarcely 642,000 pounds gathered.

In 1809, there were only 8,000,000 pounds of sugar made, and in 1810, only 4,590,000 pounds. If it be observed, that this article is worth only twelve shillings and sixpence per quintal of one hundred and fifty pounds in the British colonies, and that the colonist buys all articles which are taken to him from Europe or the United States, at double the price he could before the peace of Amiens, some notion may be formed of the deplorable state to which a mistaken policy has reduced the proprietors.

Between the years 1797 and 1802, the British merchants of Trinidad sold annually on an average, to the amount of a million sterling of their merchandize, to the smugglers of Venezuela, for which the latter paid partly in dollars, and partly in articles on which the English trader gained cent. per cent.

I cannot pass by in silence an extract from the Voyage of M<sup>c</sup> Cullum, which I have lately read in a compilation by Malte Brun, and another work, the Voyage of M. Ledru. The statements of the population and produce of Trinidad, are extremely incorrect. They say, for instance, that in 1799, there were 2,672,800 pounds of sugar made in Trinidad; whilst there were really made

in that year nearly 19,000,000 lbs. The statements of M<sup>c</sup> Cullum are equally incorrect in regard to the other articles, but those of the population less so: he has, however, omitted the Indians in his statement of population for the year 1797.

The work which bears the title of the Voyage of M<sup>c</sup> Cullum, is merely a severe philippic against General Picton; but he had enough to say, without imputing to him, as he has done, imaginary crimes. He ought not, above all, to have slandered estimable and peaceable men, who respected the authority of the governor; nor represent as innocent victims some disturbers of the public peace, and rascally scribes, of whom Picton purged the colony.

The Indian population has been constantly decreasing since the conquest of the island by the British government. In 1797 there were reckoned 2,200 indigenous natives, and scarcely 1467 in 1807. Some had died of drunkenness and vexation, others had fled to the Spanish continent, to withdraw themselves and their wives from the brutality of the infamous W. T. the commandant at Toco.

Though the population in Trinidad had increased above 500, from 1802 to 1807, only nine new sugar plantations were formed in that time. This increase of the population has been chiefly in negroes, who have augmented the hands employed in cultivation. That of cocoa has re-



mained stationary, while coffee has retrograded from two causes: first, the want of sale in the British markets; secondly, because the coffee plant has not succeeded in Trinidad, the tree giving but little fruit, and perishing at the end of ten or twelve years, though the article is always of a superior quality, and has the advantage over that of Martinico and the other Antilles of not requiring age to produce an agreeable beverage. It is from the fault, and obstinate attachment to old habits of the planters, that this cultivation has not been more successful in Trinidad. Because coffee trees thrive in St. Domingo, Guadeloupe, Dominica, St. Lucia and Martinico, on the hills, they had concluded that it would be the same in Trinidad; without noticing that the hills of this island are composed only of schistus covered with gravel, on which lies a light layer of vegetative earth, that the rain washes away after some years of cultivation; whilst the hills of the Antilles, much more high and cool, are covered with a deep bed of earth, which is retained by enormous blocks of stone, that at the same time maintain humidity and freshness.

Messrs. Beaubrun of Tacarigua, worthy and intelligent planters, some years ago invented the plan of planting coffee trees on the plain, in the manner cocoa trees are planted, that is, in the shade of the erythrina; and this mode of cultivation has perfectly succeeded. My venerable friend, Don Juan Martin de Arestimuno of Ca-

riaco, adopted this mode also, and was equally fortunate. It is to be hoped that their success will encourage the cultivation of this valuable plant in the united provinces of Venezuela and in those parts of Trinidad, which were deemed unfavourable to it, from the too great dryness of the climate. Those expert agriculturalists conceived the same idea, without having had any communication respecting it.

The mountainous portion of Trinidad, which cannot be cultivated, forms only a thirtieth part of the island; an advantage it possesses over all the Antilles, of which the chief part consists in precipitous mountains, defiles, and passes, where the labour and cartage would absorb the produce of cultivation. It results from the measurement made in 1799, in Trinidad, by order of the British government, that there may be formed on its territory, 1,313 sugar, 945 coffee, 304 cocoa, and 158 cotton plantations of 100 squares, or 320 English acres each. If it should ever arrive to that high degree of cultivation, its soil being at least as fertile as that of Saint Domingo, it will produce more than the French part of that island previous to the revolution !

I ought not to omit here that the use of the steam engine, by Messrs. Bolton and Watts, of Birmingham, was introduced into Trinidad, in 1804. It has replaced the cattle mills on some plantations. This machine is preferable to windmills, which cannot work at all times, and it is less expensive ;



the water mills alone being preferable to it. The engine alluded to, is said to have the power of sixteen horses, and performs, in a given time, the work of three oxen or mule mills on a sugar plantation. It is well known what an immense number of those animals are destroyed annually in the colonies ; the introduction of this machine in the manufactory of sugar, is therefore a very great improvement, as well as saving in colonial agriculture. Sir Stephen Lushington, who has a very large property in this island, had the honour of being the first to employ it there, in contempt of the outcry raised against it by the vulgar prejudices of others.

## CHAP. VIII.

TOBAGO.—Historical Sketch of the Island—Its Discovery and original Inhabitants.—First Establishment of the Dutch there.—The Lamp-sins.—Ceded to the Duke of Courland by JAMES I.—Manifesto of CHARLES I. in favour of the Duke.—The Island is attacked by Sir Tobias Bridges, and the French Admiral d'Estrees.—Captain Pointz.—Tobago is ceded to Great Britain.—Treaty of Aix la Chapelle.—State of the Island in 1765.—Messrs. Franklyn and Robley.—Taken by the French in 1781.—Reflections.—Recaptured by General Cuyler in 1793.—Present State of Cultivation.—Mr. Robley's Plantation and Establishment.—His numerous Improvements and Character.—Scotch Emigrants—Reflections.—Natural Productions of the Island. Plants.—Birds.—Fish—Quadrupeds—SCARBOROUGH.—Currents, &c.

WHEN Columbus discovered the new world, the Island of Tobago, of which I am not aware that the Carib title has been transmitted to us by any historian, received the above name from him, or that of Tobacco; which the islanders gave to the pipe they used for smoking the herb, so well known in after times, but then called kohiba. This herb and the pipe bore the same name at the other extremity of the Carib Archipelago, in Hayti or St. Domingo. Tobago was inhabited by a people who were generally at war with the Arroaks. Contemporary historians call them



Caribs; but I am inclined to doubt whether they belong to that nation, because the Arrooks, with whom they were at war, are real Caribs: it appears also that the writers of those days, from being badly informed, confounded all the insular aboriginal inhabitants under the name of Caribs. However it may have been, those who inhabited the island first named Tobago, and some years afterwards New Walcheren, not being able to resist the Arrooks, retired to that of St. Vincent, then inhabited by Indians with whom they lived in peace.

Tobago having become desert by the emigration of the savages, some Dutch navigators, who had visited it on their return from the Brazils, delighted with the beauty of its climate, richness of soil, and its convenient neighbourhood to the continent, induced a company of Flushing traders to form an establishment there. In that age of enterprise, 1632, they had no difficulty in finding two hundred persons, whom they conveyed there, to lay the foundations of the colony. Those adventurers gave it the name of New Walcheren, in honour of an island in the province of Zealand, on which the town of Flushing is situated.

The Indians of Trinidad, in alliance with the Spanish colonists of that island, attacked this establishment, in 1634, before the settlers had time to finish a fort they had begun. All who fell into the hands of the conquerors were massacred at the beginning of the invasion: after

which they demolished the fortress, carried off the canon, destroyed the plantations, and conducted all the colonists whom they could seize as prisoners to Trinidad.

Those of the settlers who escaped death or captivity, retired to Holland, after which Tobago remained desart during more than twenty years, being in all that time merely frequented by some seamen from Martinique and Guadalupe, who resorted there to fish for turtle; also by the Indians of St. Vincent, and the other Antilles, who touched there when they went on expeditions against their perpetual enemies, the Arroaks of the Orinoco.

In 1654, some merchants of Flushing, named Lampsins, obtained a charter from the States of the United Provinces, by which they were permitted to take possession of the island, and cultivate it for their own advantage. This charter conferred on them the privilege of appointing the magistrates and governor of the colony, with the sole restriction that the nomination of the latter should be submitted for approval to the States General.

Those celebrated merchants did not confine their operations to the forming of agricultural establishments; they constructed stores at New Walcheren, which were provided with every kind of European merchandize; and as at that time the English and French were not so much devoted to commerce as they have since been, it became a depository where the colonists of the neighbour-



ing islands belonging to those two nations, even the Spaniards of Trinidad and the southern continent, went to furnish themselves with the merchandize they required. The first colonial establishment at St. Martin's, one of the Virgin Islands, was also established by the Lampsins.

James I. of England by what right is unknown, conceded this island to his godson James Duke of Courland.

A vessel carrying out Courland colonists, arrived there some months afterwards. The captain landed his people at a place known at this day by the name of Courland Bay, which is the chief settlement in one of the most beautiful parts of the island. The Dutch did not at first oppose the establishment of their rivals, who, according to the English historians, were to the number of a hundred families, and of only a hundred persons according to the Dutch accounts. But a few days after the arrival of the new colonists, there was a skirmish between the two parties, which was followed by a treaty, in which they agreed to live peaceably, until their respective sovereigns should agree on their rights to the possession of the island. But the Courlanders not receiving either recruits, or any of those succours so necessary for a young colony, and the Dutch portion of the island being considerably increased by fresh settlers and assistance of every kind, which the Lampsins continually sent out, together with the latter having learned, in 1659, that the Duke of

Courland had been dispossessed of his territories by the King of Sweden, and imprisoned, they forced the Courlanders to deliver Fort James to them which they had built in Courland Bay.

Having recovered his states by the treaty of Oliva, the Duke of Courland demanded the restitution of his establishment in Tobago from the States General; and on their refusal, he applied to Charles II. who, being on the point of declaring war against Holland, published a manifesto in favour of the Duke, dated November 17th, 1664.

The States General paid very little attention to the King of England's declaration, and war having commenced soon afterwards between those two powers, the Duke deferred to a more convenient opportunity, his projects on the island.

There was no mention of Tobago at the treaty of Breda, and Cornelius Lampsins still remained for some years peaceable possessor. In the interval between the first and second war between England and Holland, the Governor, Hubert de Beveren, placed the Forts of Lampsinsberg and James, as well as those of Beveren and Belviste in a respectable state. The population being augmented to twelve hundred inhabitants, the colonists prospered, and believed themselves in safety, when Sir Tobias Bridges, the commander of the Barbadian privateers, attacked them unawares, pillaged and sacked the



colony, carrying off a great number of negroes.

A separate peace having been concluded in 1675, between Great Britain and the States General, these two powers mutually restored the conquests made from each other; the Dutch having declared war against France, and committed hostilities against the colony of Cayenne, the Duke d'Estrées went to attack the squadron of the Dutch Admiral Binkes, which was at anchor in Scarborough Bay, and a severe action terminated by the French obtaining a complete victory. Pursuant to the example of Bridges, the French admiral plundered the island and then returned to Europe, where he was most graciously received by Louis XIV. The Duke d'Estrées re-appeared off the island four months after, and landing at the head of his infantry, he attacked Admiral Binkes in Fort Lampsins, where the latter had taken refuge. But the Duke finding a greater resistance from the garrison than he expected, ordered a bombardment, and the third bomb having fallen on a powder magazine, a great part of the fort blew up; which catastrophe caused the death of Admiral Binkes, together with a great number of the garrison, so that the Dutch were under the necessity of quitting an establishment commenced under the most fortunate auspices in 1654. This event took place December 24, 1677.

When peace was re-established between the

belligerents in 1678, the Duke of Courland renewed his old pretensions to this island, and for that purpose he sent an agent named Pointz, to London, to offer grants of land to Englishmen who might be inclined to settle there.

In 1693, France being again at war with Great Britain and Holland, Captain Pointz made fresh attempts in England to lead colonists to Tobago, under the protection of William III. But this new project of colonization was not more fortunate than the two former. At last, the house of Kettler, sovereigns of the duchy of Courland, being extinct in 1737, by the death of Ferdinand, son of James, the British government claimed the reversion of the island.

In consequence of the altercations which incessantly prevailed between Great Britain and France, after the treaty of Utrecht, on the subject of possessing Saint Lucia, Grenada, Saint Vincent and Dominica, it was stipulated by that of Aix la Chapelle, in 1748, that Saint Lucia should remain to France, and the other three islands, as also that of Tobago, be considered as neutral; and that the subjects of all European powers should have the right to establish themselves and carry on their commerce in those islands; but that none of the contracting parties should place garrisons in them.

It was not till the peace of 1763, that Louis XV. ceded Tobago in perpetuity to England. Accordingly on the 20th of May, 1765, the King of



Great Britain appointed a commission for granting lands on the island.

Although previous to 1765, the population of the island was scarcely fifteen hundred inhabitants, it was increased to twelve thousand in 1777: of those twelve thousand persons, there were nine thousand slaves, two thousand one hundred people of colour, about two hundred Indians, and seven hundred whites.

The colonial importance of Tobago commences at this period. The British employed large capitals there, for improving the cultivation of cotton, which is of superior quality, by its extreme whiteness, the softness and length of its grain. It was then calculated that the expences occasioned by the establishment of a sugar plantation were at the rate of £50 sterling per acre, and that the net produce of the property was twenty per cent. on a plantation prudently managed.

In 1776, this colony produced ten thousand hogsheads of raw sugar. In the same year thirty-three thousand pounds weight of cotton were gathered: some planters also applied themselves to the culture of spices, such as the pimento or allspice, *myrtus pimenta*, cinnamon, ginger, cloves, &c.

Messrs. Franklyn and Robley, were those of the colonists who most encouraged and practised the cultivation of spices and cotton. It is a great satisfaction to publish the names of men, of whatsoever nation they may be, who have introduced

a new branch of agriculture, or who may have encouraged it by their capitals: such men are the true friends of humanity: why are not monuments and medals also dedicated to their memory?

During the contest with her North American colonies, so fatal to England, Tobago was taken by the Marquis de Bouillé in 1781, and subsequently ceded to France by the treaty of Versailles in 1783. From the date of that treaty until the French revolution, in 1789, this colony had for its Governor, General Arthur Dillon, in whose administration no remarkable event occurred: a few Frenchmen settled there either as planters or traders. The old government committed a great error in omitting to encourage the establishment of a numerous French population in this island. The preference granted by the government to the English over its own subjects, to gain the attachment of the former, were received by them with disdain. This policy of the ministers of Louis XVI. shews how little they were acquainted with the individual character of the British nation. When conquests of distant colonies are effected, it is frequently only for the purpose of making them objects of compensation at a peace; and in such cases it is useless to incur expenses for establishing a national population in them; but when they are obtained by treaty, it is to preserve them as long as circumstances will permit. Now, in such establishments, the physical strength of governments is



almost nothing, and it is only by a moral influence that the attachment of the colonists can be secured. This is a truth which cannot be too firmly rooted in the minds of governments which found colonies: the best and most secure ties that hold them attached to the mother country, are the identity of origin, language and manners: these ties will be found sufficient to retain them under the government of the parent state, so long as they cannot find much to gain by a change of masters, and until by a lapse of many ages, they acquire a sufficient population to admit of their becoming independent.

War having commenced between Great Britain and France, in March, 1793, General Cuyler, at the head of two thousand men, proceeded to this island, and made the French garrison surrender.

The cultivated part of the island is in a most flourishing state. I have never seen better farming or finer negroes. The principal plantation which belonged to the late Mr. Joseph Robley, at Sandy Point, is, perhaps, the best colonial establishment in the Antilles. It consists of six windmills for bruising the canes, and three for grinding maize. This property is divided into three sugar plantations, each having a double set of boilers. The negroes inhabit three streets, near the plantation to which they are attached: their huts are built of stone, and covered with slates. In 1803, they amounted to a thousand, of all ages, and both sexes. Every thing about this plantation has the

appearance of order and abundance. I went there several times during the peace of Amiens, and never did I hear the sound of the driver's whip. Next to the plantation of Sir William Young, at Saint Vincent's, I do not believe that there were any men in existence, employed in cultivation, more happy than the negroes on the Robley plantations, in 1803.

This great proprietor had all the tradesmen necessary for such establishments on his property, such as masons, carpenters, wheelwrights, smiths, farriers, &c. Once while I was at his house, the wind broke a vane of one of the windmills, and we heard a moment afterwards, that a similar accident had happened to a neighbour. "Come," said he, "and you shall see how soon I can repair the damage." A conque shell was blown, and I immediately saw a hundred negroes appear, some with pulleys, others dragging a capstan, and the rest an enormous triangular ladder; at last a large waggon drawn by six fine mules brought a mill-vane, always kept ready in case of accidents: it was put up in half an hour, and they then fitted the sail to it: in short, four hours after the accident, the mill worked as well as ever. Mr. Robley then observed, "this is one of the many advantages a large proprietor possesses, in having his workmen at home: I have a double set of every thing necessary for sugar works on those three sugar plantations, which are on the same estate, and may be called six, as there are six mills,



and three double sets of cauldrons, and their appendages, mill works, boilers, &c. All are numbered and ready in my stores; so that if any accident happens it may be repaired in a few hours, without interrupting the manufactory of sugar. My neighbour, who has just experienced the same accident, has neither workmen nor materials of his own: so that while he goes to town to purchase those articles, for which he will be obliged to pay fifty per cent. more than they have cost me in England; and while his overseers are running about to seek workmen, and three or four days may be lost in procuring them, there are no longer any signs of the accident on my premises. My neighbour's canes, already cut, will ferment, and perhaps he will lose four or five hogsheads of sugar, without calculating the time of his negroes." I believe no man ever felt more happy than Mr. Robley, whilst he explained the above details, and others relative to the management of his plantation. This gentleman was the creator of his own fortune; he was born of a respectable family in Cornwall, and had gone to the West Indies at the age of eighteen, employed as a clerk in the navy office. He first established himself in Tobago, in 1768, and began to cultivate the cotton plant with a capital of about £1700 sterling: already in 1789, which was only twenty-two years afterwards, besides the magnificent establishment at Sandy Point, he possessed another sugar plantation with a water-mill of great value,

which he had presented to one of his nephews.\* He had, besides, at the peace of Amiens, a large sum in the public funds. This fortune he owed entirely to his activity, prudence, and the fertile soil on which he had fixed his establishments.

This great cultivator had besides two vessels which were his own property : the first time I saw them lying at anchor before his house, I mistook one for a ship of the line, and the other for a frigate. They came twice a year and lay in front of his residence for the purpose of taking his produce to Europe, and of bringing not only all that was necessary for himself and his negroes, but also merchandize which he sold to the merchants of Tobago, and on which he gained considerable profits. No man in any country ever obtained more respect and authority than Mr. Robley in his limited sphere : he was president of the colonial council, and consequently governor when the other was absent.

Joseph Robley was the first inhabitant of this island, and perhaps of all the West Indies, who went to the expense of constructing water and wind mills expressly with a view of grinding maize for his negroes, and it was not long before his example was imitated by his neighbours. Before his time, and even at present in the other colonies, the negroes are obliged to grind the

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\* Mr. J. Robley, the present liberal and intelligent proprietor of this interesting establishment.



maize with small iron mills, which fatigues them extremely, causing a great loss of time when they return from work at mid-day or in the evening. On those plantations they have not even sieves for separating the bran ; but on the Robley estate they receive their rations of maize flour well sifted, and all the grain which they bring to the mill is ground gratis. Mr. Robley neglected nothing that would induce them to prefer this food : from its stimulating qualities he thought it the best vegetable nourishment for men who cultivate the ground in hot climates. He had also made considerable plantations of the bread-fruit tree of Otaheite, and other plants brought from the South Seas by Captain Bligh, as well as those which are cultivated in the magnificent garden of Saint Vincent, by Mr. Anderson.

Mr. Robley returned to England after the peace of Amiens, and was then about sixty years of age. He had not seen his native land from the age of eighteen : but he did not long enjoy the fruits of his industry having died in a year after his arrival. He bequeathed several legacies, among others, one to a Frenchman who had rendered him some services. The first instance I ever heard in the colonies of any other Englishman who had left a legacy to a Frenchman !

The present inhabitants of Tobago are nearly all Scotch. I have known even some Barbadians there who are very worthy people, and treat their negroes with humanity ; for according to an old Norman

proverb, there are worthy people every where, even in Barbadoes, and the piratical towns on the coast of Barbary! But at Tobago, as at Grenada and Barbadoes, it is the piratical portion that gives the law.

It is really a most astonishing circumstance how those thirty-six months Scotch\* have found means to make considerable fortunes in many of the West India islands, and to monopolize all the lucrative places. On the European continent the name of English is given to all subjects of his Britannic Majesty; and yet the English, Welsh, Scotch, and Irish are by their prejudices, customs, and even their local laws, four distinct nations: the Irish, a people eminently frank and generous, say, and not without reason, that the Scotch are the best servants and the worst masters in the world! Bands of those poor devils which continually arrive in the colonies, always land in tatters!

These men are soon placed with the planters in the situation of negro drivers, or as clerks with merchants: they are laborious, parsimonious, and sober when they have to maintain themselves at their own expence: they accumulate gradually and by pennies, lend their money at usurious interest, and finish by amassing considerable capi-

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\* The author says that this is the period for which Scotch emigrants are in the habit of selling themselves to West India proprietors: hence the singular appellation they have acquired.—ED.



tals. At length, some become partners in commercial houses, when they distinguish themselves in business by their artifice, a word which, in mercantile language, is synonymous with roguery. Others become agents for great plantations for proprietors; and these are metamorphosed into implacable tyrants over their slaves. Both the one and the other then affect an insolent haughtiness, which renders them truly burlesque.

The Scotch support and assist each other; and this principle would be very laudable, if it did not proceed from a repulsive and hostile spirit to other people, without excepting even the inhabitants of the other British provinces. It has often happened that Scotch merchants and planters have dismissed their English and Irish clerks and overseers without giving them any other reason, and without having really any other, but that of replacing them by a Scotch clerk or overseer. It is not surprising then that such men, with such dispositions, resembling parasite and noxious plants, should finish by making themselves masters in every country where they have been suffered to take root. An Irishman alluding to this disposition, regarding the Lords Bute, Mansfield, Melville and others, as well as the Scotch mobility, observed to me one day, "that if ever a Scotch plebeian succeeded in acquiring a fortune in China, he would end by becoming prime minister there; and if the Chinese Emperor would let him go on, there would not be a single eccle-

siastical civil or military situation in the whole empire, that in the course of ten years would not be filled by Scotchmen!"\*

The first English planters in Tobago, Young, Melvill, Franklyn, Robley, Robertson, &c. were persons of respectability; but the clouds of Scotch boors, and barbarous Barbadians who became the majority there, have corrupted the manners of the colony, and rendered it almost as uninhabitable for an honest man as that of Botany Bay.

As there is nothing more absurd, and at the same time so unjust as to insult a nation indiscriminately, I should declare that nothing is more distant from my thoughts and intentions than the idea of rendering the Scotch nation odious to my readers. Having had occasion to observe it in Europe as well as the colonies, having resided at Edinburgh, and travelled in Scotland, I owe it to truth and impartiality to say,

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\* However illiberal these opinions of M. Lavaysse may be thought by some, the Editor, without becoming in any manner a party, has already given his reasons for not suppressing them. But if the concluding comparison applied to our important settlement in New South Wales has been hitherto justified, it is most devoutly to be hoped that ministers will lose no time in making that stupendous appendage to the British crown more worthy of the sovereign who rules and the subjects that now so unwillingly obey them. The question has been taken up, but if a system of half measures is merely the result of inquiry, the colony might as well be left in its present wretched condition. For an excellent account of the manifold evils under which the colonists suffer, see Mr. Wentworth's Statistical and Political Description.



that I firmly believe there does not exist a people among which there is, in the higher classes, more virtue, benevolence, and hospitality. I cannot think of the venerated names of Maitland,\* Whyte,† Duncan,‡ Munro,§, Gregory, Lind, Blair, Read, Beattie, Dugald Stewart, Sir Ralph Abercrombie, the Duke of Buccleugh, and other persons with whom I had the happiness to be acquainted, without recalling to mind families in which the patriarchal and social virtues are hereditary.

No country has had, and still possesses a greater number of illustrious learned and scientific men of the first order, than Scotland; and a circumstance worthy of remark, but of which all nations unfortunately cannot boast, is that the biography of those literary characters, one only perhaps excepted, proves that they were also honest men! The present men of learning in Edinburgh are worthy of their predecessors. Do not those honourable principles prove that they have been always estranged from factious and sectarian rage? ||

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\* Maitland of Markgill, related to the Earls of Lauderdale.

† Alexander Whyte, a barrister of the greatest merit.

‡ Andrew Duncan, professor of medicine, a man of worth and science.

§ Matthew Munro, a great merchant in Grenada; who protected, with all his influence, the persecuted French. He died at Bath in 1795. The other names are known to all persons of information.

|| The Editor feels a peculiar pleasure in having an opportunity

It is for the moralists of Scotland to explain why in a nation where there is so much virtue and knowledge in the first classes of society, there should be found more servility and meanness in the lower, than among the chief part of the other European nations; and why, in spite of his dress and grimaces, a Scottish courtier so much resembles a rich upstart!

I hope the reader will pardon me this digression, which I have thought necessary to prove my impartiality, and I can truly assert that no national prejudice has influenced my description of manners. I now return to the subject of Tobago.

It is said in this colony that the Lampsins had introduced the nutmeg and other aromatic plants of the East Indies, and that they are still found in the woods growing wild. I have read in an English treatise, explanatory of the map of this island, by Jefferies, that the nutmeg, cinnamon, and *myrtus pimenta*, which produces the berry known by the name of allspice, grow there spontaneously in the gravelly soils. I took a great deal of pains in 1803, to discover the nutmeg

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of confirming the author's sentiments on this subject, and whatever prejudice or passion may suggest, with respect to that class which seems to have excited the wrath of M. Lavaysse, there can be but one opinion entertained as to the unshaken integrity and honourable principles which distinguish that part of the Scottish community he has so properly complimented.



tree, and I am convinced it does not exist there. I know that some individuals, conversant in botany, have made researches as fruitless as mine, for the same object. But the cinnamon tree has become wild in the island, and I know not why they do not cultivate it. The myrtus pimenta produces a very agreeable spice, which is an excellent tonic, and an indigenous plant. The late Mr. Franklyn had made a considerable plantation of it; but this was abandoned by his sons, in order that they might attend exclusively to the culture of the sugar cane. This forest of pimento is become the haunt of innumerable flocks of parrots, which are excessively greedy of the grain, and so jealous of their property, that they exterminate, without mercy, any other birds they find there.

I believe Tobago possesses almost every kind of plant that grows in the Antilles; and besides, like Trinidad, the greater part of those which are peculiar to Spanish Guiana and Cape de Paria. The most valuable, as fruit trees and alimentary plants, are the orange, lemon, pomegranate, fig, and guava trees.

The culinary plants of Europe, excepting the cauliflower, thrive very well in the gardens of this island. The figs and grapes are also of a very fine flavour, and produce twice a year, if care be taken to prune the trees and vines in a fortnight or three weeks after the fruit has been

gathered. All those useful and nourishing productions of the Island of Tobago, it possesses in common with that of Trinidad.

It is a remarkable circumstance that Tobago having the same vegetable productions with Trinidad, quadrupeds and birds are found in the latter which do not exist in Tobago; and in Tobago some birds that belong to the continent are not found in Trinidad; the katraka, for instance. It is equally singular, that although a great number of them have been taken to Trinidad, and flown to the woods, they never multiplied there. Feuillee and M. Sonnini have given a good description of this singular bird, which they rank in the family of pheasants.

The Hoccos, those magnificent birds so well known in Trinidad, are not found at Tobago. The other indigenous birds, or which frequent the coasts of this island, are wild ducks, waterhens, wood pigeons, turtle and Virginian doves.

Three varieties of humming birds; blackbirds of yellow and black colours; thrushes; white woodcocks. A small bird of the size of a sparrow with magnificent plumage; it has the head, neck, and the upper part of the body of the most brilliant red; the feathers of the wings and tail of a beautiful purple colour above, and of sky blue underneath; its belly is also sky blue. I have never seen a more beautiful plumage than this little bird exhibits. Herons, the pouched pelican,



eagles of the Orinoco and flamingoes frequent the coasts of this island.

Though nearly all the quadrupeds of the immense region contained between the Amazons and the Isthmus of Panama, are found at Trinidad, very few of them are to be seen in Tobago. The small deer of Guiana, so common at Trinidad, does not exist at Tobago.

The amphibious animals which frequent those coasts, are turtles and the sea cow.

On the shores of Tobago are found a great variety of shell fish, such as starry, greenish, striped, red, and of all the colours of the rainbow that have not been described, and of which more than one new genus might perhaps be found.

Those I have more particularly observed approach the genus that the most modern naturalists have described under the heads of Venus, Buccinum, Turrilita, Turritela, Helmet, Stromba, Tellina, Voluta, Cene, the oyster, &c. Formerly great quantities of oysters were attached to the mangrove trees in Tobago; but the destruction of those trees has occasioned their disappearance.

The surface of this island is more elevated in the eastern than the western part, which contains very beautiful savannas or natural meadows. The interior is composed of rounded hills and delightful vallies. The rotatory and undulatory motions of the currents are every where seen.

The soil of Tobago is generally rich, and the

vegetative earth more or less deep: none have stone on the mountains nor in the vallies; you never see those large blocks of hyaline quartz that are met almost every where in Trinidad, on the summits of mountains as well as the plains. The rounded pebbles seen in small quantities at Tobago in the beds of rivers, are of quartzose freestone, some of hyaline quartz, others of amphibolic schistus, and of the red pebbles noticed in a former chapter. The different excursions I made in the interior of this island have never enabled me to discover either sulphur or carbonate of lime. Tobago resembles the eastern part of Trinidad, with this difference, that the vegetative soil in the first named island, is deeper on the hills than on those of Trinidad. The hills of both islands have not, like the mountains in the Antilles, those sharp peaks, and uncovered sides, that denote great volcanic convulsions. Every thing seems to indicate that Trinidad and Tobago were separated from the continent by a sudden retiring of the sea; the Carribean Islands were apparently detached at the same time; but the volcanoes acted, and still act a more important part in their granitic and basaltic mountains. At the Caribbeans, the spectator's imagination is moved, attracted and transported by the fearful, sublime and stupendous: while the pictures presented in Tobago and Trinidad are of a calm, regular, and magnificent description.



A very well informed man, though not a naturalist, has been struck with this difference in the geognostic physiognomy of Tobago from the Antilles. "Nature," says Sir William Young, "is on a more extensive plan than at the Antilles, and gives rather the idea of a continent than of an island. It is not merely its neighbourhood to South America that suggests this idea. If the appearance of the island (which I term its physiognomy) authorises us to believe that it formed a part of that continent, its vicinity indicates still more clearly that it was separated violently, and that it was, at a remote period, the southern boundary or a bold promontory of Mexico."

Scarborough, the capital of this colony, is situated in  $11^{\circ} 8'$  North latitude, and  $63^{\circ} 30'$  West longitude. The island is twenty-four miles in length, from north-east to south-west, and twelve miles in its greatest breadth.

In 1803, no more than three families of the aboriginal inhabitants, forming in the whole twenty-six individuals, remained at Tobago. This unhappy race is annihilated in the vicinity of the white people, wherever they have not been civilized by religious institutions.

The currents near Tobago are very uncertain, especially in the channel that separates it from Trinidad. At the new and full moon, the tide rises four feet. The north-easterly trade wind blows all the year about the island.

The bays called Man of War, Courland, Sandy Point, and King's Bay, are calculated for vessels of the largest size.

Tyrrel's Bay, Bloody Bay, Mangrove Bay, Englishman's Bay, Castera's Bay, and La Guira's Bay, have good anchorage for vessels of a hundred and fifty tons and under. Halifax Bay is fit for ships of two hundred and fifty tons; but there is a shoal at the entrance of it which requires a pilot.

If Tobago is seen towards evening, and the navigator fears to approach it, much sail should not be carried, but he ought to stretch to the southward under easy sail; otherwise, the current, which always runs to the north-west or north-east, would make the ship lose sight of the island; and if carried northward, must take her so far to leeward, that it would be impossible to regain the island.

On entering any of the bays to leeward, ships may approach quite close to Saint Giles's Rock. Vessels that come from the eastward, and which steer for the south coast of the island, ought always to keep well to the southward, otherwise the current which is round the lesser Tobago, and which always sets to the north-west, would carry them too far north. There is nothing to fear at the south-west, to the Bay of Courland, but rocks above water, except that called Chesterfield Rock.



## CHAP. IX.

INQUIRIES concerning the Negroes.—Their intellectual Capabilities.—M. LILET.—Opinion of CAMPER and BLUMENBACH.—Difference between Negro Tribes.—How they are improved.—BLANCHETIERE BELLEVUE.—Cause of Crime and Degeneracy in the Negroes.—Instances of Fortitude and Generosity among them.—Anecdote.—Allusion to the Cruelties exercised at Surinam.—Singular Instance of Resolution in Suffering.—Heroic Speech of a Negro.—Anecdotes.—Pride and Vanity of Negroes.—Affection for their Children.—Causes of Infanticide amongst them.—Poisoning prevalent.—Mode of punishing the Delinquents.—Objections answered.—Reflections.—Advantages of Freedom.—Effects of the Slave Trade.—Sir William Young's Plantation.—Treatment and Management of the Slaves there.—MULATTOES.—Their harsh Treatment by Europeans, and Condition in the Colonies.

A GREAT deal has been written on the negroes, and very learned men have published many falsehoods and absurdities on the subject. As if it were not enough that the institutions of their country and those of Europeans condemn them to slavery, it is also necessary to represent them as monsters in the physical and moral world! The celebrated Camper quotes the opinion of different writers who have discussed this point from the times of Herodotus, Strabo and Pliny, down to our own days. Will it be believed that there have been amongst those, men, who were

so ignorant of the first principles of zoology, as to suppose negroes to be a race produced between man and the ourang outang? Buffon, Daubenton, Camper, Scœmmerring, the Munroes, Hunter, Blumenbach, Cuvier, Gall, Lacepede, and Humboldt, have made researches into their organization. Some of those learned men have considered them as a species, though they have employed the word race; others deem them a variety; these think the difference of their colour, hair, features, and some slight change in the bones, are only the effect of climate, food, certain habits and local causes, during the long succession of ages. One opinion rather generally entertained is, that the negroes are a race of men very inferior in their intellectual faculties to Europeans, the savages of America, and even other Africans with straight hair, known by the name of Moors. I would ask of those who are so little informed on the noblest part of natural history, comparative anatomy, as to suppose organization to have no relation with intelligence, if it be astonishing that men, such as the negroes, born in countries destitute of every institution for intellectual culture, should not have made any progress in the liberal arts and sciences?

It has been proved\* by numerous examples,

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\* See "Literature of the Negroes, or Inquiries into their intel-



that whenever negroes had the means of receiving education, they have profited by it, like the rest of mankind. And even while this sheet goes to the press has not the Institute of France received astronomical observations on the comet of 1811, made in the Mauritius, by M. Lilet, a negro born in Madagascar, and who has arrived at a knowledge of the superior sciences, without education, and by the mere force of genius?

The illustrious naturalists I have alluded to, though they admit that the negroes are of our species, (which, I believe, no person of common sense now doubts), still consider them as inferior to the rest of mankind, as to their intellectual faculties. Camper, Sæmmerring, and Blumenbach, who have attended particularly to the anatomy of the various forms of heads, thought they found in this organ, or assemblage of organs, the cause of the inferiority in negroes. There are to be seen in the anatomical plates of Camper, and Blumenbach, heads of negroes, of which the facial angle approaches to that of the ape. But besides them are the heads of Calmucks, whose

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lectual Faculties, &c." by H. Gregoire, formerly Bishop of Blois, and a member of the French Institute, &c. 1 vol. octavo, Paris, 1803.

\* He has made the best map we possess of the Isles of France and Bourbon, and written very interesting, geological and botanical tracts on Madagascar. Mons. L. is also a correspondent of the ancient Academy of Sciences.

inverted forehead and the rest of the shape do not announce more intelligence. I am far from denying the principles of those excellent investigators; but with all the respect I entertain for their knowledge, I believe, and I hope to be able at some period to demonstrate that they have hastily decided on this question, from too few examples. What, in fact, would be said of an African or Asiatic philosopher, if such there are, as there have been, in those countries, who, seeing some ill-shapen skulls of Europeans, would decide that the Europeans are necessarily a stupid race of men?

Since I have undertaken to descant on this subject, I ought to tell the truth. No prejudice or other earthly consideration, no fear of displeasing a class of men, otherwise respectable, but whose minds are embittered by misfortunes in which I also participate, nothing shall induce me to speak otherwise than I think: happy if my feeble but impartial voice should at some future day enlighten governments on the localities and reciprocal interests of colonies and mother countries.

I shall therefore candidly declare what a residence of sixteen years, the possession of estates in the colonies, and a long habit of governing negroes have enabled me to observe. In the first place a Moco or Ibo negro differs as much by the inferiority of his cerebral organization and intellectual powers from a Coromantyn or Gold Coast negro,



Mandingo, Congo, and especially a Mozambique, as the Calmucks and some tribes which live not far from them, are inferior to Europeans: I pledge myself for the correctness of this assertion, which though not sufficiently developed now, will be so at some future period, by facts and a more learned pen than mine.\*

The inferior races of negroes improve in the colonies, in respect to intellect, either by their mixture with the superior ones, or by a better climate than that of Guinea. There is no doubt also that their communications with Europeans and their descendants contribute to the development of their intellectual faculties. All the colonists who possess a spirit of observation, agree that the Creole negroes are in general more intelligent than the greater part of the European peasants, and that they are in no respect inferior, in this point of view, to the white

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\* It is not the history of negroes that I pretend to write; I merely wish to dispel the prejudices that are unfavourable to them. Bryan Edwards, though a defender of the colonial system, expresses himself thus, in speaking of the negroes of Whydah or Fida, commonly called Papos in the colonies: "they are docile, and when they have been transported into the colonies it is not necessary to employ violence to make them work in agriculture, because their own country is very well cultivated. Bosman, who travelled in that country, speaks with delight of the manner in which they cultivated their lands, of their industry, wealth and the mildness of their manners." History of the West Indies, Vol. II. Book 4.

Creoles who have not received an education. I have known men of great wit and sound sense among them. I remarked, however, that though the Creole negroes have generally a more intelligent countenance than the Africans, they have not in their look, and especially their smile, either the mildness or benevolence of many of the latter. The Coromantyns are distinguished by the haughtiness of their gait and looks, without any indication of ferocity; the Mandingoes, Foulhas, and Mozambiques, by great mildness in their look and smile; the Mokos and Ibos by a narrow and low forehead, small heads, projecting teeth, eyes without expression; and the Creoles generally by traits of trick and cunning, which they no doubt acquire in flattering the young whites from their earliest infancy. But I have known many estimable persons in all these tribes. A Creole of Martinico, Mr. Blanchetiere Bellevue, who was advantageously known to the Constituent Assembly by the brilliancy and vigour of his talents, made a collection of their proverbs, maxims, and songs. It contains some articles worthy of being placed beside the Manual of Epictetus, Aphorisms of Cervantes and of our most witty songs. And who have been the authors of them? Negroes and Mulattoes, who are rigidly prohibited from learning to read or write!\*

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\* These opinions of the author are fully borne out by the astonishing spectacle of a black dynasty in St. Domingo, unquestionably



I think I already hear some of my readers speak of their vices, their libertinism, knavery, and

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the most extraordinary event to which the French revolution has as yet given rise. When we reflect on the abject state of that fine island in 1789, and view the richest portion of it in 1819, governed by a *legitimate* monarch, who is not ashamed of his origin, will any one deny that the age of revolutions has not at length arrived? Leaving this part of the wonder to its own merits, we have only to contemplate the able organization of the new kingdom, and the talents displayed by the members of its administration, and fresh sources of amazement burst upon the mind! Parochial and primary schools, on the Madras system, in every part of King Henry's dominions; a royal college, with annual prizes given to the most distinguished students. Academies for music and painting, a regular national theatre, and royal residence, which, for elegance and chasteness of design is not inferior to many of the palaces of Europe, a numerous clergy, and a long train of nobles, are but a few of the wonders to which our attention is now so irresistibly excited in that interesting quarter of the globe.

The reflections of a native and subject of Henry I. the Baron de Vastey, in reply to observations contained in the French Journals, deserve to be recorded, while they prove how capable a black writer is of emulating his white brethren, even on the score of literature. "Five and twenty years ago," says the enlightened baron, "we were plunged in the deepest ignorance, we had no notion of society, no distinct ideas of happiness, no powerful feelings; our faculties, both physical and moral, were so overwhelmed under the load of slavery, that I myself who am writing this, thought the world finished at the horizon which bounded my sight; my ideas were so limited that things the most simple were incomprehensible to me; and all my countrymen were as ignorant, and, if possible, even more so than myself! I have known many of them, who learned to read and write themselves without the help of a master; I have seen them walking with their books in their hands, inquiring of the passengers, and begging them to explain the signification of such a character or such a word, and in this way, have many, already advanced in years, become able to

propensity to thieving, &c. My reply is, that in all times, those vices were and ever will be the inseparable companions of slavery.

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read and write without the benefit of education. Such men have become notaries, attornies, advocates, and judges, astonishing the world by the sagacity of their judgment; others have become painters and sculptors from their own exertions, and have also surprized strangers by their productions!"

That his Haytian Majesty is determined to preserve the structure his talents has enabled him to raise, may be inferred from the following extract from his manifesto in assuming the regal dignity. "The last of the Haytians," says this eloquent state paper, "will breathe out his last sigh sooner than renounce his independence. Free by right, and independent in fact, we will never relinquish these blessings; nor witness the subversion of the edifice which we have raised and cemented with our blood. Faithful to our oath, we will rather bury ourselves beneath the ruins of our country, than suffer the smallest infringement of our political rights." In addition to his military talents, Henry is represented by those who know him, as humane and benevolent, eminently distinguished in the exercise of social virtue, both as a kind parent, good husband, and steady friend—strict in the observance of all the duties of RELIGION and MORALITY! Contrary to the too prevalent custom both in Europe and Hayti, he attached himself in early life to one woman, *whom he never forsook*. That woman is now Queen of Hayti, beloved by all ranks and conditions of his subjects. The King is said to possess a propriety and dignity of manner seldom attained by the best educated man; and his proclamations, generally dictated by himself, are compositions of which the most civilized cabinets of Europe need not be ashamed! Since this extraordinary man, and honour to his species, has chosen the kingly government as best suited to the genius and disposition of his people, God grant, that in holding out an example of private worth, so justly meriting imitation by many white contemporaries, his public conduct may be exempt from those vices which render some of the latter unpopular at home and contemptible abroad!--ED.



The cruelties and ferocity which they exercised on the whites in Surinam, St. Domingo, and the British colonies, where they have revolted, will nevertheless be remembered with horror, although there can be no difficulty in tracing the original cause.

Read the dismal history of revolutions, in all times and amongst all nations, and you will every where see that whenever slaves have succeeded in breaking their chains, they have forged arms from them to exterminate their masters. But since we are on the subject of the character of negroes, let us consider them in respect to fortitude and generosity, the first qualities in human nature. I shall select some examples, extracted from two respectable writers, Bryan Edwards, and Mr. Stedman.

There was a revolt at Jamaica, in 1760. The principal chief of the insurgents was named Tacky, a Coromantyn negro: he had been a chieftain in his own country, and was killed about the commencement of the insurrection. When government had quelled the revolt, it condemned one of the chiefs to be burnt alive, and the two others to be hung up in iron cages, and there starved to death, in the public square of Kingston. The wretched being destined to be burnt, was placed sitting on the ground, his body chained to a post, when the fire was placed at his feet. He did not utter a sigh, and saw his legs burnt to cinders with a calm firmness; but the

chain that confined one of his hands, being loosened, he seized one of the firebrands that consumed him and threw it in the face of his executioner.

The two others requested to have a good meal before they were suspended in their cages, which was granted. From that day, says the historian of the British colonies, until the one on which they expired, they never complained, except of the cold during the night; but in the day time, they conversed gaily with their countrymen assembled round the gibbet. On the seventh day it was rumoured amongst the spectators, that one of them wished to communicate an important secret to his master, "my near relation," says Mr. Edwards: "being absent in the parish of St. Mary, the commanding officer sent me to hear it. I endeavoured, by means of an interpreter, to extract the promised information, but we could not hear his reply. I recollect that he and his companion in misery laughed immoderately at something that happened; though I do not remember what it was. On the following morning one of them expired without uttering a word, and the other died the next day, the ninth of his punishment."\*

Stedman, after having given a picture of the cruelties practised on the negroes at Surinam, relates that on his arrival in that colony, a white

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\* History of the British Colonies in the West Indies, Vol. II. Book 1.



man was flogged by a black executioner, for having stolen some money from the town-house ; and he remarked that this negro inflicted the punishment with great signs of commiseration. A negro was broken on the wheel for the same crime, and he bore that horrible punishment without a sigh. A moment afterwards, they prepared to hang another, and whilst the hangman was tying the cord round his neck to launch him into eternity he looked stedfastly, with a smile of contempt, at his judges who were amongst the spectators of the execution. “ Having expressed to the persons who were near me, (says Captain Stedman) how much I was shocked with the injustice and cruelty of those executions, and surprised at the intrepidity of the negroes during the punishment, a very decent looking man thus addressed me : “ Sir, you are newly arrived from Europe ; but if you were better acquainted with negro slaves, what you now see would neither excite your surprise nor your pity. It is not long since I saw a negro suspended from that very gibbet by the ribs. The following is the manner in which it was done : two incisions were made in his side, in which was passed an iron hook attached to a chain. He lived three days suspended in that manner, his head and feet hanging down, licking from his bleeding breast the drops of water that fell on it, for it rained at the time. The sufferer did not, however, utter a groan, and never once complained. On the third day, another negro was

flogged under the gallows, and having cried from pain, the former reproached him for his want of courage: *Do gay fasy?* "Are you a man?" said he to him, "you behave like a child!" A moment afterwards the soldier who was sentry on the spot taking pity on him, dashed out his brains with the butt end of his musquet. I saw another negro quartered," the narrator continued: "after his arms and legs were tied to four very strong horses, an iron nail was driven under each nail of his hands and feet. He suffered that without complaining, requested a glass of rum, and ordered the executioners to let loose the horses. But that which amused us most," continued this monster, "was the humour of the fellow, who, when the hangman presented the glass of rum to him that he had asked for, told him to drink first, as he was very much afraid of being poisoned, and desired him to take care that his horses should not kick him. As for old negroes being broken on the wheel, and young women burnt alive, nothing is more common in this colony !!!"\*

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\* Narrative of a five Years Expedition against the revolted Negroes of Surinam, by Captain I. G. Stedman.†

† The process of suspending human beings by their ribs, has always been a favourite mode of punishment, amongst many others equally repulsive in the Dutch colonies. It is even confidently asserted that the system of legislation by which these horrible cruelties are sanctioned is still in force at the Cape of Good Hope: if so, God forbid that any individuals disposed to emigrate from this country, however great their sufferings may be at



Stedman's work is full of instances of the cruelty of Europeans, and the heroism of the martyred negroes. The noble speech of one of those negroes, which I extract from the same work, will not be misplaced here. One of the fugitive, or revolted slaves, being brought before his judges, who had condemned him previous to hearing what he had to say in his defence, requested to be heard for a few minutes before he was sent to execution ; when leave being granted, he spoke to the following effect :

“ I was born in Africa : while defending the person of my prince in battle, I was taken prisoner and sold as a slave on the coast of Guinea. One of your countrymen, who sits amongst my judges, purchased me. Having been cruelly treated by his overseer, I deserted and went to join the rebels in the woods. There also, I was condemned to become the slave of their chief Bonnay, who treated me with still more cruelty than the whites, which obliged me to desert a second time, determined to fly from the human species for ever, and to pass the rest of my life

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home, should be induced to select the Cape, while so many less exceptionable and more fertile regions are open to them. Let us also hope that the meeting of parliament will be marked by a strict inquiry into the causes of that war of desolation and bloodshed, which is now waging between the poor Caffres, and those whom they consider, no matter how erroneously in our opinion, as usurpers and invaders.—ED.

innocently and alone in the woods. I had lived two years in this manner, a prey to the greatest hardships and the most dreadful anxiety, merely attached to life by the hope of once more seeing my beloved family, who are, perhaps, starving owing to my absence. Two years of misery had thus passed, when I was discovered by the rangers, taken and brought before this tribunal, which now knows the wretched history of my life, and of which the only favour I request is, to be executed on Saturday next, or as soon as it may be convenient."

This speech was pronounced with the greatest moderation, and by one of the finest negroes the author had ever seen. His master, who, as he had remarked, was one of his judges, made him this atrociously laconic reply: "Rascal! it is of little consequence to us to know what you have been saying; but the torture shall make you confess crimes as black as yourself as well as those of your detestable accomplices." At these words, the negro, whose veins seemed to swell with indignation and contempt, retorted in showing him his hands; "Master, these hands have made tigers tremble; yet you dare to threaten me with that despicable instrument! No, I despise all the torments which you can now invent, as well as the wretch who is about to inflict them." On saying these words, he threw himself on the instrument, where he suffered the most dreadful tortures without utter-



ing a syllable. Nor was he heard to say another word till the moment of ending his unhappy life on the gallows.\*

Does the history of the heroic times contain incidents more worthy than those of exciting the admiration and sympathy of generous minds, and what do they require to reach the remotest posterity?

The interesting history of Stedman is replete with traits of generosity and fidelity of the negroes to their good masters. He mentions, amongst others, a chief of the rebels, who had been treated in the most cruel and insulting manner. Having surrounded his master's plantation several times at night, in the hope of finding the tyrant in it, and of exercising his vengeance on him; the wife of the latter had remained in the house, and each time that the negro chief came, she threw herself at his feet, in tears, accompanied by her little children. The negro raised her, caressed his little masters (as he called them,) shed tears of affection over them, and retired, without doing the least injury to the plantation. He concluded by promising his mistress, of whose conduct he could not complain, that he would return no more to trouble her.

Still there are those who assert that the negroes are a race of degenerated men, inaccessible to

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\* See Vol. II. of the same work, page 208.

every noble and generous sentiment! Amongst the Europeans, could we find, in such circumstances, many whites who would display more greatness of soul, and as feeling a heart, as this negro of Surinam and his companions in arms?

Bryan Edwards states in his account of the insurrection at Jamaica, in 1760, that the rebels spared Abraham Fletcher, the overseer of his uncle, because the negroes on that plantation assured the insurgents he had always treated them with humanity: he adds very properly, that this ought to be a lesson for overseers!

In order to reply, by facts, to the interested or ignorant writers who wish to make negroes pass for a depraved and ferocious race of men, unworthy of participating in the advantages of civilization and liberty, I have chosen rather to quote two well known authors, Bryan Edwards, proprietor of a plantation in Jamaica, where he had four hundred negroes, and who certainly was not a *nigrophilus*, and Stedman, an officer in the Dutch service, whose interesting voyage bears the stamp of sincerity and the most generous feeling. I have preferred, in speaking of the character of the negroes, also to quote foreign authors, whose reputation is established, than to relate a great number of facts witnessed by myself, and which are highly honourable to the character of negroes and people of colour. Some of these will not, however, I trust, be unacceptable to my readers.



During the civil wars in Martinico, I wandered one day to the outposts of our camp, and I found myself surrounded in the bottom of a ravine by a patrol of negroes and men of mixed blood. I thought myself lost, because the two parties waged a war of extermination. Whilst they were deliberating whether they should shoot me immediately, or conduct me to head-quarters, one of the negroes approached, and said: "It was you who, on such a day, asked forgiveness for me, when Mr. A. P. my master, would have picketted me for a robbery, of which I was innocent, and which was committed by that comrade you see there! *Vous bon bequé, vous teni enco cœur mouton France!* Be tranquil, no harm shall be done to you." After this address they no longer thought of shooting me, but offered me some rum; upon which I drank their healths, and they drank to mine. They next proposed that I should join their party, and promised to appoint me as one of their officers. I answered that if I were to accept their generous offers, it would be said by my party, that I had deserted, and was a traitor. Upon this they unanimously approved my view of the subject, and permitted me to return to my camp, merely requiring my word of honour that I would not mention what had occurred to any one, adding, that if their general (which general was a white) heard they had spared me, they might readily lose their lives for it.

Afterwards, during the civil war in Saint Lucia, one day when I carried an order to a post half a league from our camp, I was aimed at by a detachment of mulattoes and negroes concealed in a thicket. Five or six shots were fired, none of which reached me. A man of colour seized the bridle of my horse, and whilst I was drawing my sabre to rid myself of him, he shouted to his comrades, "Stop firing, do not injure this white man;" and I remained motionless, with my sabre lifted over his head. I was immediately surrounded, he who held my bridle was told that I must dismount to be shot. "You shall not shoot this white man, or if you persist in it, I will die with him!" was the reply of Belfond, in a voice of thunder. "This white-man has never despised people of colour: when he speaks to us he always says Sir.....I went to his house some time ago on business, he was at breakfast and made me sit at table with him. Are there many fellows of that cast?"

Here I ought to mention what I have observed, in common with all persons who have had the means of studying the character of negroes and people of colour; it is, that there are no men in the world more susceptible of contempt\*. I have

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\* The negroes have naturally a great deal of pride in their character; but it degenerates into vanity in the state of slavery. With respect to negro vanity, the following circumstance happened at Blois last year. Some catholics and protestants exhort-



seen negroes become furious by a contemptible or ironical look from their master or overseer, though not accompanied by any offensive expression in language : I have seen them complain of it in the most audacious tone, and at the hazard of being knocked down. One day when a negro annoyed me with his complaints against a sorcerer, who, he said, had rendered his cocks and hens barren, and given his pigs the cholic, I shrugged up my shoulders in looking at him with an air of compassion ; whilst he, with eyes sparkling with rage, exclaimed ; “ strike me, if you please ; but do not look at me awry ! ” To make amends for this involuntary offence, I told him that if he had taken better notice of me, he would have seen I did not look at him with contempt, but that it was an involuntary movement of pity, in seeing a

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ed a young negro to be baptized. He was on the point of deciding in favour of the protestant faith. M. de M.... undertook the conversion of the sable candidate, and gained a victory over the children of Calvin, for he was baptized by a parish priest. M. de M.... gave him twelve francs (ten shillings) as a present on the day of his baptism. In what does the reader suppose that he employed this money ? He inquired if there was not a sedan chair in Blois, and found there was one. Upon which our young proselyte gave the twelve francs to two chairmen, to carry him through all the streets. At every moment he put his head out of the windows, to show his beautiful hair highly powdered ! But what most flattered his self-love, on this occasion, was doubtless to see himself thus carried by two whites !

sensible negro like him, esteemed as he was by all the whites, believe in such nonsense. This little compliment composed him: I saw a smile on his lips, and satisfaction in his eyes; but he did not believe a whit the less in the influence of sorcerers.

The negroes, in general, show the greatest fondness for their children, and do not refuse them any thing. It is, however, but truth to say, that when they deserve chastisement, they perform it with violence; but their children are the most obstinate weepers in the world, and the father or mother after having beaten them several times, generally finish by giving them playthings or cakes to pacify them.

All I can say of the religion of the negroes is, that some are idolaters, and others Mahometans; but the greater part of them are circumcised. It appears certain that they practised circumcision before Mahometanism was known to them. The idolatrous negroes are of milder manners than the Mahometans, probably because their religion is not intolerant.

The two crimes most revolting to nature, abortion and infanticide, ought to be very rare amongst men who have so much affection for their children; yet there are frequent instances of them: but it is only on plantations where negroes are treated with injustice and cruelty. In such cases it is not uncommon for a negro and his wife to resolve on poisoning themselves and their children, to



to be freed from misfortunes without a remedy. They always begin by poisoning their children, then some of the slaves who are most useful to their masters, such as the refiners, carpenters, or masons. Thus they have before they die the pleasure of seeing their masters exasperated and ruined by the loss of their slaves. They usually employ slow poisons, the effects of which endure for several months; thereby enjoying for a long time the only revenge they can practise on their oppressors; because, for themselves, they consider death as a benefit, and passage to a better life. It is very remarkable that when a negro has taken a resolution to ruin his master, by poisoning his gang, he is never informed against by his comrades, though they generally know who the poisoner is, and that each expects to perish by the effects of his vengeance: they preserve his secret inviolably, which is often difficult to learn from them even in the midst of punishments! Then the proprietor, who sees his fortune ruined by the daily deaths of his slaves, demands from government the appointment of a commission for trying the poisoners. Those commissions bear, in the French colonies, the name of burning chambers, and they are well termed. The proprietor or his overseer fills the offices of accuser and judge at the same time: in this simulation of a trial, where sentence is always pronounced at the will of the proprietor, who is at once accuser, witness, reporter, and judge, pretended sorcerers

are often employed to find out the guilty, who have great influence on the minds of the negroes, and who are themselves poisoners by profession. It happens even at times that great proprietors consider themselves sufficiently powerful, to do what they call justice, in their blind fury at home, and which consists in burning, by their private authority, the negroes they believe to have been guilty of poisoning. I expect already that certain persons who cannot be cured of their prejudices by any revolution, and whom no misfortune can render reasonable, will term me a *nigrophilus*. I shall not reply to such an accusation; but merely say that the colonial system in the American islands is a monstrous anomaly. The slave trade makes every European shudder, who has human feelings, when he sees herds of negroes landed, who are sold like beasts of burden. I appeal to the recollection of all those who have been present at sales from slave ships. What sensations did they experience, when, for the first time they saw those bargains for human flesh, before the interest of the moment and custom had familiarized them to this abuse? The same, I suppose, that a man feels, who for the first time is present at a scene of carnage, or who commits his first bad action. In favour of the actual colonial system, it will be asserted that St. Domingo and our other colonies enlivened our commerce, caused our manufactures to flourish, and enriched France. I agree to all that; but the cause and the source of those riches



was neither less odious nor unjust. The British East India Company might employ those very arguments to justify all the crimes of which its agents have been guilty. I believe it is proved to every dispassionate mind and every honest heart, that colonies would have been more populous, and rendered much more wealth to parent states, if, in their origin, they had been peopled with freemen. In fact, is it not known to all those who have occupied themselves with this matter, that it was necessary to renew the slave population of our colonies every twenty years, or, which amounts to the same thing, that they annually lost the twentieth part of their population? Yet the colonies of freemen, situated on the continent of North America, doubled theirs every twenty-five years, and have doubled it every sixteen years since their independence. The means of subsistence are much less abundant, and require more labour from man, in those colonies, than in the Antilles; and it is known that when all other matters are equal, population increases in proportion to the means of subsistence. These facts, which cannot be denied by the apologists for negro slavery, *without modification*,\* prove how bad this system is in respect to interest,

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\* I have put the expression *without modification* in italics, because whoever proposes to ameliorate the situation of the people of colour and negroes, is pointed out as an anarchist, by a class of men whose prejudices are incurable.

independently of its immorality. Mr. Edwards has proved that the capital invested in the British colonies, in agricultural establishments, does not render five per cent. during twenty years, on the greater part of the plantations. M. de Humboldt has proved, in his *Statistics of Mexico*, that the labour of slaves costs more than that of freemen. Is it then worth the trouble of emigrating, remitting property so far, and committing so much injustice and cruelty, for such small profits? It is generally believed in Europe, that the money employed in purchasing a good plantation in the colonies, produces fifteen per cent. and sometimes more. This is true, when the plantation is well and humanely regulated. That which ruins the greater part of the proprietors, is the mortality of the negroes: of a thousand transported from Africa, grief or ill-usage destroys one third, in the first three months after their arrival; and at the end of six or seven years, seven or eight tenths of the others are dead! In Trinidad, Tobago, and Grenada, it is considered very fortunate when of thirty young negroes bought in the course of a year, there may be six in good health five years afterwards. On the greater part of the plantations the negroes have few children; a third of those children do not reach the age of one year, and the half of another third never arrive at the age of four, the period at which they are considered as escaped, according to the expression of the country.



But I ought to state that there are plantations in the British and French colonies, where the population augments, as in the best regulated countries. It increases almost equally with the white population in the Spanish and Portuguese colonies, because the negroes there are treated with great humanity. Of all the British, French, and Spanish plantations I have known, the one on which the most admirable order is preserved, is undoubtedly that of Sir William Young at St. Vincent's. This plantation, delightfully situated partly on the declivity of a hill and partly in the plain, on the sea coast, is watered by a fine river. The negroes are as well lodged as the substantial peasantry in the finest countries of Europe, while their properties are inviolable. The father of the present proprietor always took care that, in his absence the plantation should be managed by a man of known humanity, and his worthy son follows the example. There, neither the manager or his deputies have the privilege of flogging the negroes. When a negro has committed a fault, the manager or overseer gives an account of it to the attorney, who pronounces sentence, after having heard the accused and the witnesses he produces in his defence. It is well known at St. Vincent's that this plantation is that of the whole island on which the fewest crimes are committed, and a whole year sometimes passes without the necessity of punishing a negro on it, whilst a day seldom occurs but some negro is flogged on the adjacent estates.

Amongst other excellent regulations made by Sir William, one deserves to be particularly noticed: as soon as the physician has declared a negress with child, she is dispensed from all work, and not required to labour until one month after child-birth. As long as she suckles her infant, she is allowed two hours more repose every day than the other negroes, and on Saturday she is not permitted to work. If she has two children, she has two free days, without reckoning Sunday, which all the others have. Should she have three, she is allowed three days: in short, she has a day free for each child of which she is the mother, so that the negress who has six children is exempted from all work at the plantation. So that her whole time is free for the duties of housewifery, and she does not the less receive her rations of seven pots of meal and four pounds of salt meat and fish, as well as a similar ration for each of her children. There are on this plantation a chaplain and physician, who take the greatest care of the negroes; for Sir William Young has never employed any but men of probity. The population is so increased on the estate, that not only has there been no necessity for a long time past to purchase any negroes, but there were in 1806 more than the number necessary for cultivating it; and yet the proprietor has had the good sense and humanity not to sell any of his slaves, by whom he is adored. When his father died at St. Vincent's, the negroes presented a petition praying that the



remains of their dear master might be interred in the plantation: thus it was that they still called him in 1804; and I have seen those of them who wept in pronouncing his name, though it was then more than twenty years since his death! When the body of Sir William was conveyed on board a vessel anchored off the wharf of the plantation, to be sent to England, for the purpose of being deposited in the vault of his ancestors, the negroes who could not obtain boats to accompany it on board, swam after it as far as the ship; and respectable persons in the island have assured me, that some who were not good swimmers, drowned themselves in this pious enterprize!

The negro population increases on all the plantations that are administered with humanity. Amongst the establishments which I can mention most favourably are, in the first place those of the religious missionaries of Martinico and Guadaloupe, where the negroes were treated in a patriarchal manner, and instructed on principles of religion, and in which neither concubinage nor adultery are permitted. Many other estates are managed with great humanity: those which I have most known, are the plantations of Fortier, Du Buc, at the Grand Fond and Gallion, of Lucy, Fossarieu, &c.; in Martinico and Guadaloupe the plantations of Poyen, Gondrecourt, Desislets, and Decressoniere, Bellegarde, &c. I believe that on the greater part of the plantations in the British and French co-

lonies, the negroes are humanely treated, and merely name those more particularly known to me for good administration.

Let it not be supposed from what I have said above, that I approve of the opinions of those who, in the revolutionary delirium, liberated the slaves without modification, and raised them to the rank of citizens. Though a victim, like a great number of the colonists, to the consequences of that measure, I have not less esteem and regard for some of its promoters. Their sincere zeal for the cause of humanity, and the exaggerated opinions of that period, which misled them, form their excuse. I can distinguish between some worthy men, whose sensibility and imagination were inflamed by fictitious representations of the cruelties of the colonists, and the mountebanks of philanthropy, such as Raynal\* and some of his disciples, who, whilst they enriched themselves in the negro trade, did not cease to represent the colonists as tyrants. We now know how to appreciate the false zeal and hypocrisy of those pretended friends of humanity, impostors who, if born in another age, would have been fanatical monks.

Now that I have concluded this very imperfect sketch of the colonial system, and freely

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\* It is well known that Raynal held shares in the slave ships of the house of D..... of Nantes, and in those of the firm of Sollier, of Marseilles.



expressed my opinions on the condition and character of the negroes, many of the colonists and apostles of the liberty of the negroes will doubtless be greatly offended. For if the least improvement in the situation of the slaves, or smallest shock on their authority be merely hinted, they instantly exclaim, "he is a *nigrophilus*!" a term of reproach which, in their language, is a gross insult. But the past ought to serve as a lesson for the future. The organization of the colonies that are restored at a general peace, or those which may be founded, in future times, ought seriously to occupy the attention of government.

I shall make an observation in this place which may appear paradoxical to many: it is, that there is a much greater distance from the savage to the pastoral state, than from the latter to one of the highest civilization. Accordingly it would be much more easy to give a horde of Tartars, Hottentots, or negroes a taste for our manners, customs and sciences, than it has been hitherto found to persuade the American savages to rear flocks and herds, or make them feel the advantages of the most simple agriculture. But when the negroes succeed in obtaining their liberty, they are generally found to form new plantations, and some of them, by dint of labour and economy, become great proprietors in the end. Others act as extensive traders, and such are seen in all the colonies, especially at Trinidad, where they often become considerable merchants. I

have thought it necessary to make this remark, in order to point out a marked difference between the character and dispositions of the negroes and savages. Such a form of government, and law, as may be good for the one, is not fit for the others: this then is what those who undertake to superintend their civilization ought to be convinced of; for if they do violence to nature, they will cause her to retrograde instead of advancing.

This would be the proper place to speak of people of mixed blood, who, in the European languages are stigmatised with the insulting denomination of Mulatto. And who are the men that have given them this epithet? Even those who begot them in their brutality! The fate of those unfortunate people is at least as much to be pitied as that of the negroes. They know that they are the children of whites, and yet they are treated by their fathers and brothers as an abject and proscribed cast! There are none, even to the negroes, who do not arrogate to themselves the privilege of despising them; and the hatred which is continually fomented between these two classes, is one of the great pivots of colonial policy. A white man forms a connection with a negress or a mulatto woman; he has children by her; the mother rears them with tenderness; the father caresses and takes care of them, though, in the greater part of the colonies they are prohibited from giving him the fond appella-



tion of father.\* This class is so degraded, that a woman of colour considers it an honour to be the concubine of a white man ; but she regards herself as his wife, and generally maintains an inviolable fidelity to him, though she knows that her keeper will abandon her as soon as he may take a fancy to marry a white woman.

Whatever education a man or woman of colour may have received, whatever may be their virtues, however considerable their fortunes, nothing can raise them to a level with the meanest white, who is authorized by the prejudices of the country to treat them with insolence. And yet those men and women of colour are daily seen to practise the kindest hospitality towards unfortunate whites abandoned by every one else. I could fill a volume with instances of generosity and humanity in the negroes and people of colour, and shall conclude this chapter by the following.

Mr. J. B. Solger was born in Grenada, the offspring of a French officer and a negress. His father never noticed him, nor ever took any care

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\* One of the most grave, rich and immoral magistrates in Martinico, had a child by a woman of colour in 1798. In 1802 this child, of whom it was positively asserted that the said magistrate was the father, ran after him crying "*papa, papa !*" whilst he was riding in Lamentin. The wretch made his horse trample on the poor child, and struck it with his horsewhip ; saying to the unhappy mother, " this will teach you how to make that little serpent call me father again."

either of the son or his mother. Thanks to his talents and industry, Mr. Solger has become one of the greatest proprietors in Trinidad ; and this fortune he owes entirely to his own activity and prudence. His father, on the other hand, lost his property and profession, during the troubles which agitated Martinico, in the beginning of the French revolution. Upon this his neglected son allowed the unworthy parent a large pension from the moment he was informed of the loss of his fortune, until the day of his death !



## CHAP. X.

INDIANS.—Classed into Caribs and Parias.—Opinion of Rochefort.—Contradictory Accounts of that Writer.—Analogies.—Religion of the early Tribes.—Sorcery.—Sylvester.—Anecdote.—Curious Dialogue.—First Establishment of Missions.—Comparison.—Reflections.—Jesuits.—Mission of St. Joseph.—Mass of the Indians.—A Review.—INDIANS OF GUIANA.—Anecdote.—Degraded State of some Tribes.—Custom of selling their Wives and Children.—Indians of Trinidad.—Their uncivilized State.—Nefarious Conduct of some English Proprietors.—The Arrouages.—Their Trade.—Accouchement of the Indian Mothers.—Conjectures.—Account of the Black Caribs of St. Vincent's.—Visit to *Grand Sable*, and curious Description of a Carib Chief.—Concluding Remarks.

I DISTINGUISH the natives of the South American coast, comprised between the mouth of the Amazons and that of the Orinoco, and from that river as far as Cape de Vela, including those who formerly inhabited the Antilles, in two great classes or principal casts, the Caribs and the Parias. The Arrouages, Arrouakans, or Arroouaks (according as those words are pronounced by the Spaniards, British, or French), Galibis or Calibites, Guaraouns and Guahiros, appear to be tribes of the fine race of Caribs. A great number of tribes are treated with much contempt by the Caribs and

Arroouaks, the two principal nations and rivals of this part of South America. It is very remarkable that Paria should be that cast of all others which they most despise.

It appears that the primordial nation was subdivided previous to the conquest by the Europeans, into a great number of tribes which were different from each other in distinct customs and languages, the effects of local causes and national antipathies.

Previous to my hazarding some conjectures on the origin of those nations, it will not be improper to insert what is said of them by a traveller who visited the Antilles about the middle of the seventeenth century. Rochefort, in his *Natural and Moral History of the Antilles*, says that the Caribs of his tribe were as ignorant of their own origin, as of monuments of antiquity, and as little curious of the present, as of the future; that the chief part of them believed themselves descended from the Galibis, their allies and great friends, and neighbours of the Arroouaks, in the country known by the name of Guiana.

Some of the traditions relative to the origin of the Indians have, it must be confessed, quite the appearance of being fabricated by the European writers of the seventeenth century, who were anxious to make a figure amongst their contemporaries, as persons occupied in learned researches. Their writings bear an appearance both of credulity and enthusiasm. Rochefort, who col-



lected the stories of that time to give them a very clumsy historical form, is full of glaring contradictions in his reasoning. For instance, after having said that the Caribs of the continent peopled the desert Antillès, he says, a moment afterwards, that they exterminated a race of Arroouaks, who were the inhabitants of them. Still there are found both in his relation, and that of Bistok, whom he quotes with great praise, some interesting facts for the learned, who are fond of inquiring into the origin and history of barbarous nations. Some things may excite their curiosity and inquiries, such as the words Carib and Amana, common to the people of Florida and of South America, and to the platforms or elevated plains of those two countries so distant from each other. It also appears by these writers that the Floridans adore the sun; and that the men did not give it the same name that the women did. The former calling it *hayeyou*, and the latter *kachi*; the sun was the good principle with those people, and they acknowledged a bad principle, which they named *mabouya*; a name which they gave to mushrooms, and poisonous plants in general. There are in the Antilles, at St. Lucia, for instance, mountains which still bear the name of Maybouya. They offered sacrifices of deer to the good spirit, on elevated places, and made offerings to Mabouya in caverns. They called those offerings *anacri*. The Caribs worshipped beneficent deities, subordinate to the Great Being;

According to the persons who collected these traditions during the seventeenth century, the women did not give to the inferior beneficent deities the same names as the men; they called them *tchemum*, and in the plural *tcheminum*; while the men called the spirits of an inferior order *je-heiri* in both numbers. These names are still found in the superstitions of the savages who live in the neighbourhood of the Orinoco, and in the vallies of the coast range of Cumana, even amongst many of those who frequent the missions. I have never perceived that they worshipped the good spirit or great being during the many years I lived amongst them, with the authority of a chieftain, and enjoying as much of their confidence as they could well grant to a white. But, they make many offerings to Mabouya, the bad principle; or to speak more correctly, to his priests or sorcerers, who unite in their persons all authority and science, the same individual exercising generally the functions of civil and military chief, priest and physician, until a more clever or a bolder impostor supplants him. Yet these changes never produce any tumult or sanguinary scenes. The various tribes of Indians were independent previous to the arrival of the Europeans; they waged war against each other, and then, no doubt, it was those who possessed most cunning or courage, that obtained authority. But since these tribes have been subjected or restrained by the descendants of the Europeans, it



is only by trick and knavery that an Indian succeeds in exercising some authority amongst his people. I was enabled to observe a curious instance of it in Trinidad. An old Indian, named Sylvester, who was still living when I quitted the island, although blind, exercised an authority almost absolute over the Indians of the north part of the island; he was about sixty years old in 1806: he lost his sight in the following curious manner: having had a species of ophthalmia in 1792, another sorcerer persuaded him that he had an infallible specific for curing him. On this occasion Sylvester allowed himself to be deceived by the other cheat; who blew some powder into his eyes, and scratched them with a thorn of the mauritia aculeata. When he was convinced, some days afterwards, that he had become blind from the malice of his physician, he ordered him to be brought into his presence, and after having reproached him before the rest of his tribe with the crime, which he attributed to an ambition of succeeding him, he predicted that his rival should die in torments in a few days, as a punishment for the offence. In fact, he did die in the manner Sylvester had foretold. In pronouncing his malediction, the impostor added that this outrage, far from destroying his authority and influence, would consolidate them still more, and there is no doubt that the prophecy was fully accomplished. Though execrated and despised by the Indians, he maintained an absolute sway

merely from the fear with which his malignant practices inspired them. When this abominable old man hears of a pretty Indian girl, he orders that she shall be brought to him, and as jealous as the Indians are of their wives and daughters, still none dare oppose his desires. An Indian would believe himself damned if he consented to serve a white man as hunter, fisher or servant, without having obtained permission of Captain Sylvester, (for that is the title he has chosen) and this permission is only to be obtained by making him presents. While I held the office of corregidor in his neighbourhood, which gave me authority over him, I employed the means of persuasion, rather successfully to dissipate the fascination and fears of the Indians. When he found his authority nearly extinct, he caused himself to be conducted to my house one day, and requested a private conference, which I granted, he then without further preamble, proposed to divide his authority with me. I appeared to enter into his views, on condition that he would initiate me into his magical secrets; to which he readily consented. This first interview took place in the morning: I invited him to dine with me, on condition that he was to reveal his secrets after dinner. Whilst waiting for the hour of dinner, I went to the village to propose to some of the most superstitious amongst the Indians, and some others of those who were the least so, to come and be witnesses of what was to pass between us. They agreed to it,



even to his brother Antonio, who has as much good nature and frankness in his disposition, as Sylvester has cruelty and perfidy. I recommended them to maintain a profound silence, and placed them in a room, from whence they could see and hear all that passed between the sorcerer and myself. After having enlivened him with a good dinner, and a few glasses of claret and Madeira, our conversation turned on his knowledge of magic. He supposed himself alone with me. "Is it not true, Sylvester," said I, "that you would not pass for so great a magician if your followers were not such silly creatures? It is not to reproach you that I say this; you are very right in taking advantage of the superiority of your genius. It is the same amongst us—men of talents live at the expence of fools."

"Let me have another glass of Madeira, and a cigar," replied Sylvester, with the usual smile of deceit upon his countenance, "and I shall then instruct you in all I know about it." He now made a pompous display of his knowledge of plants, and of his talent at employing them in the cure of diseases, wounds, ulcers, &c. "Is that all your witchcraft, Sylvester?"—"It is indeed, master."—"How then have you been able to persuade the Indians that you knew so much, that you can find out every thing, and that by your connection with the great Mabouya, you could load them with calamities, and even make them die?" Sylvester continued to smoke his cigar, and did not reply.

“How did you manage to destroy the Indian, who under the pretence of curing blinded you?”--“And pray, Mr. Corregidor, if any one had put out your eyes, would you not kill him if you could?”---“That is not to the point: I ask how you who are blind could contrive to kill the fellow who blinded you?”---“Then you believe he was a wicked wretch?”---“Most certainly I do, Sylvester.”---“I had him poisoned.”---“So then it was neither the Devil nor the great Mabouya that killed him.”---“It is I who am the Devil and the great Mabouya,” exclaimed Sylvester with a loud laugh. “Thus, Sylvester, all your magic consists in the knowledge of plants, especially of those which are fit for poisoning your enemies.”---“I know also how to make *grimaces* which frighten the Indians.”---“Do me the favour to inform me, Sylvester, who it was taught you all those fine things.”---“He who was chieftain before me, taught me a part, but I have invented much more of them than he ever told me.”

“I know, Sylvester, that it was you who hindered the Indians from becoming christians; that it was you who tore down the cross which the missionaries had placed here some years ago; tell me sincerely: I will give you an anker of rum, a hat, shirt, and pair of shoes, if you say the truth.”---“The missionaries are more expert magicians than myself. I should no longer have any influence if there was a priest here: those priests are great rascals; Messrs. \*\*\* have told



me so."---"Sylvester, those you mention are very bad people, and libertines; they could not debauch the Indian women, and cheat the men, if there were a priest in the village."—"Gossip Corregidor, for my own part I don't like priests!"

Here the dialogue ended; when, addressing myself to the Indians, I observed, "this is the man in whom you blindly believed, and who makes you do either good or evil, according to his interest or caprice, and who has made you bear false witness." Upon this nearly all the Indians, not excepting his brother, overwhelmed him with reproaches, abuse and curses. A moment before, he believed himself alone with me; he was now petrified, and had not a word to say: immediately afterwards, he requested a glass of spirits, in a violent tremor, and returned home amidst the hootings of his former admirers, conducted by an orphan girl of fifteen years old, who he had instructed to be the minister of his infamy. I never saw a countenance exhibit a more guilty expression than that of this wretch, at the conclusion of the above scene.

At the commencement of the seventeenth century, the Jesuits established several missions about this part of South America, and the Caribs advanced towards civilization as rapidly as could be expected from their indolence and that carelessness produced by a mild climate, where the earth produces spontaneously and without labour, a great quantity of roots and fruits fit for the sustenance of man; where the

forests abound in game, and the rivers and coasts in fish. To these natural advantages the Caribs add the cultivation of some plants, such as the banana, yam, sweet potatoe, the manioc or manihot, maize, &c. The fruitfulness of the soil is such, that seven or eight days of moderate labour in the course of the year, will furnish a Carib abundantly with all the vegetable part of his food. The chase and the fisheries, which for him are not labour, but exercise and amusement, supply the remainder. A day of hunting or fishing generally yields subsistence for a family for a fortnight: what is not eaten fresh, is salted or smoke dried.

But how much the situation of the South American Indian differs from that of him who inhabits the northern regions! The latter neither plants nor sows: some wild fruits, not very nourishing, compose his vegetable diet; it is true that for seven or eight months, during which his spring, summer and autumn last, the forests supply him with game, and the lakes and rivers with fish; but how deplorable is his fate during a severe winter of four or five months! Then, tormented and excited by hunger, like the wild beasts that dispute the empire of the deserts with him, he penetrates the forest with his family, to give chase to bears and deer. He is sometimes weeks, nay, whole moons without finding any means of subsistence, on a ground covered with snow, or fish in those rivers and lakes indurated with ice.



Yet the child of nature is passionately attached to this poor, and wandering but free life: he speaks with contempt of our riches, dress and palaces, and he holds our social institutions in horror. Still, however, if a germ of civilization should be introduced amongst these people, it will make rapid and durable progress. There is in the physical and moral constitution of the indigenous inhabitants of America, situated in the same latitudes as Europe, an energy of character, an aptitude for the abstract combinations of the mind, and a taste for eloquence, as well as a beauty and strength of body, which render them very superior to the indolent and apathetic aboriginal of the hot countries of the same continent. Some tribes of the United States already give the most brilliant hopes, particularly the Illinois, Creeks, and Cherokees. They have, in fact, made the most difficult step towards civilization. The great Washington had the happiness and glory of introducing the use of the plough amongst them; a glory, in my opinion, equal to that of having been the hero of his country's independence.\*

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\* Whatever the policy of General Washington may have been, towards the poor Indian tribes, *all* his successors have not justified the praises of M. Lavaysse, as most amply proved by the recent war of extermination, carried on against the ill-fated Seminole and Creek Indians. The whole conduct of that war, including its origin, progress and sanguinary climax, the murder of Arbuthnot and Ambrister, furnish materials for history, by

Amongst those who have laboured to propagate Christianity in South America, the Jesuits, no doubt, met with great success; they devoted themselves with admirable skill and perseverance to give savages a taste for agriculture and the arts which are indispensable to it; and though the institutions which have succeeded them, be not as ably organized and administered as theirs, yet it is but justice to say, that there are in South America missions in which the greatest order reigns, and where the Indians live as happily as our nature permits. I have been enabled to observe those of the Island of Trinidad, and the provinces of Venezuela. One of the most interesting is that of Saint Joseph, situated almost at the foot of the mounts Ithamaques. This is on the bank of a small stream which flows into the Caroni, and not far from the junction of that river with the Orinoco. It is really an enchanting scene, and

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which the American character will be judged in future times. It has already produced its full moral effect on the people of Europe, for notwithstanding their boasted freedom, and affected love of independence, every impartial and honest man declares that where such bloody deeds are suffered to pass not only unpunished, but with approbation, there, must iniquity and corruption dwell! But let the American executive continue to sanction the persecution of the weak and helpless Indians whose soil they have usurped: while such a system is marked by the just detestation of present times, and the execrations of posterity, the same retributive power which visits the sins of the fathers on their children in Europe, will also remember the unworthy descendants of a Penn, a Franklin, and a Washington!—ED.



truly worthy of having been the residence of the Jesuits, who were the original founders. When I visited it, there were some portraits of those fathers there, which the Capuchins, their successors, had respected: these, though taken by bad painters, are, as are all those of the Jesuits which I have seen, the representations of men more or less talented, except what appears incomprehensible, that of their founder, Saint Ignatius, which represents the physiognomy of a madman!

It is not one of the least amusing and inexplicable anomalies in the history of the human mind, that a society, of which cunning and policy were the principal characteristics, had for its founder, the knight-errant, or Don Quixote of the Virgin Mary. But every one does not know, that the true founder and author of the institutions of this society, was neither a madman or enthusiast, his name was James Laines. It was he who made the statutes by which the society was to be composed of politicians, learned men and saints. They were accused of having been opponents to the progress of knowledge; but this is an error. They merely wanted to modify and direct its progress, according to their own views and principles. At the period when this society was destroyed, it was preparing to direct the course of philosophical learning, as it had regulated literary education: this may be seen from the fine and able discourse of Guinard, that gained the prize at the French Academy, in 1757; one of the best,

according to the opinion of many persons, which had ever received a premium from that body.

The mission of Saint Joseph belongs at present to the Catalan Capuchins; it has several chapels of ease in this province. The church and house of the missionaries are large and handsome, but very simple. The village of the Indians is of a square form, where each Indian family has a house built of mud, or unburnt bricks well beaten, the roof of which is covered with the magnificent foliage of palm trees. Each has a little gallery in front, which contributes to its coolness. This situation, at the foot of the mountains, on the banks of a chrystal stream which loses itself in the majestic Orinoco; the contrast of the beautiful church, the European architecture of the convent, with the cottages of the Indians covered with foliage, are truly interesting to the European visitor.

Recovered from the involuntary train of thought inspired by this novel scene, I was desirous of examining the details and administrative economy of the mission, when my reason was as much satisfied, as my imagination had been exalted. I am happy to be able to do justice to those worthy Spanish missionaries, and it is a very agreeable duty for me to refute the calumnies of which they have been the object both in America and Europe. To stigmatize such men, it is necessary to be possessed of the very genius of evil; and it is to have an apathetic soul, inacces-



sible to every virtue, not to love and venerate them. I shall endeavour to give the reader an idea of what a mission is in the Spanish colonies: it is a place where from four or five hundred, as far as one thousand Indians are assembled in a village built very regularly, and always on the banks of a river. The head of this society has the title of corregidor, and is a kind of governor, or rather a magistrate, who unites, in those countries, the authority of a justice of peace and mayor. The corregidors of the Indians were appointed by the viceroys and captains-general. They are not lucrative employments, but those which are most respected in the Spanish colonies. The corregidor has many alcaldes or municipal officers under his orders, who are also justices of peace: the corregidor and alcaldes are white men, chosen from amongst the most respectable and enlightened proprietors of the country. There is also in each mission a certain number of Indian alcaldes, subordinate to the corregidor and white alcaldes. Those copper-coloured magistrates are extremely proud of their places; their costume and staves of office, are in every thing similar to those of the white magistrates: the hierarchy ends with the alguazils or bailiffs.

The agriculture and industry of the Indians united in missions, consists at first in growing the provisions already mentioned: such as the banana, sweet potatoe, manihot, maize, yam, &c. and of some other objects in which they carry on a little

trade, such as cotton, indigo, arnotto, hammocks and baskets. There is no instance known of an Indian who has had the industry to become a regular trader. They sell those objects to the publicans who settle in the missions, and who are at the same time dealers in hardware, linens, groceries, &c. All that the Indians earn, is swallowed up by those traders, as the natives are strangers to economy.

The pastor of the mission is a monk. I believe that almost all those in the province of Caraccas belong to the capuchins, recollets, or some other branch of the order of St. Francis. There are some missions whence several missionaries go every Sunday to perform divine service for the neighbouring hamlets, and catechise them. I visited that of the Arragonian Capuchins, twice in 1807: it is situated between Cariaco and Carupano in the province of Cumana. The first time I went there I alighted at the house of the corregidor, a native of the country, and son of a Biscayan, an old officer of artillery. I was struck with the fine figure, polite manners and natural eloquence of this elegant young man: to fair hair, the complexion of a Fleming or an Englishman, he united the slender person of a Basque, and the muscles of a Hercules. I was recommended to him by three of his friends, Don Juan Mayoral, commandant of Cape de Paria, Don Miguel de Alcala, comptroller of Carupano, and Don Juan Martin de Arestimuno, one of the principal proprietors of



the province of Cumana, the most virtuous and benevolent men I have met in my travels. I was perfectly well received by the corregidor: it being Sunday, he proposed that we should go to the Indians' mass, where I accompanied him. I was surprized to find in that wild place a large and beautiful church, the choir of which was very well gilt; this was also the work of the Jesuits. The mass had begun, the Indians were all kneeling, and in two lines: they had large rosaries in their hands: when the priest elevated the host, they prostrated themselves with their faces to the earth, and when they rose, the females chaunted a psalm, in which some of the men sang the chorus. At the communion, in which very few of them were allowed to participate, they struck their breasts violently. I observed that the young people, male and female, appeared more devout than the old ones: this is a remark that I have made more than once.

On leaving the church, my young corregidor invited me in the kindest and most obliging manner to pass a day with him on his cocoa plantation, at about a league from the Indian village. My business not permitting me to accept his invitation, he ordered breakfast in his Indian cottage. Our repast was composed of milk, chocolate, white bread and cakes of maize for the first course; for the second, fresh eggs, an omelet with ripe bananas, very large and delicate cray fish of the river, smoked fish, wild boar's ham, sweet-

meats, Spanish and Madeira wine, and lastly, coffee.

When we had done breakfast, the negro and Indian maid servant of the corregidor, took away all that we had left, placed it on a table which was in the gallery or portico, and regaled themselves together with my negro and the three Indian guides. They furnished me with a new opportunity of remarking what I had often observed, that the negroes and the Indians, though habitually sober at home, eat voraciously when they can get food that pleases their palates.

The amiable corregidor next told me that it was necessary I should decide on staying with him that evening, as my Indian swine (*puercos d'Indios*) were incapable of attending me. To make my stay in his village the more agreeable, he ordered a review and exercise of his battalion of Indians. General Miranda having formerly made a descent at Ciro, the captain general of Caraccas had formed a kind of battalion of Indians in various parts of the province. Each soldier had a straw hat, shirt and trowsers of gingham; their arms consisted of a bow, a quiver of sixty arrows, a large knife, and cutlass suspended to the girdle by a string. The officers were distinguished by a musquet instead of the bow and arrows, a round black hat ornamented with feathers, and by their shoes, which they wear only on parade days. Their exercise consisted in turning to the right or left, and of separating into



platoons of five, ten, fifteen, and of twenty: three platoons of twenty form a company, which has for its officers a captain, lieutenant, sergeant, and three corporals. They shoot from their bows standing and kneeling, with admirable quickness and precision.

As I was desirous not leave this place without becoming acquainted with the missionaries, I requested the corregidor to conduct me to them, but their servant informed us that two of the reverend fathers were taking their mid-day nap, or *siesta*, and that the third had gone to catechise in the neighbourhood. It was five o'clock, and therefore necessary to decide on departing from this romantic spot, provided my Indians were in a travelling state. I awoke them and made them smoke a cigar, after which they went to bathe, and we took leave of our excellent host.

I visited this mission again, a month afterwards. I had left the worthy Arestimuno at Cariaco, in the morning, to go to Carupano, from whence I was to embark for Guadaloupe. It is about ten post leagues, across deserts and forests, from Carupano to Cariaco. We travelled with rather a numerous caravan; for in this country travelling is performed in caravans as in the deserts of Africa and Asia. It is not bands of robbers which are feared, but jaguars and venomous reptiles. Without a guide, one might be easily lost in the paths which intersect those forests in various directions. The chief of our caravan was

a merchant of Guadaloupé, who conducted a number of wild mules, which he had bought in the province of Cumana. Tired with the slowness of the march, caused by the tricks of the mules to escape from their keepers, I determined on separating from the caravan, so as not to pass the night in the woods. I had hired a Spanish mulatto and two Indians: the mulatto was mounted on a horse, the negro rode a mule, which was also laden with my portmanteau: one Indian carried the remainder of my luggage, and the other some provisions, and a case containing wine, lemonade and rum. To arrive at the mission of the Arragonian Capuchins, it is necessary to ascend and descend a mountain: at ten o'clock in the morning we were on its summit. It was intensely hot; a thermometer of Farenheit that I carried with me, stood at 84°: however, I felt it more hot than in a similar degree of thermometrical heat in Trinidad or Martinico, because there was no wind.

After suffering excessively from thirst owing to there being no water at hand, we arrived at the mission about noon.

The Indians of Guiana live on the banks of the different rivers which flow between the mouth of the Amazons and those of the Orinoco. The Arroauks and Caribs are the most remarkable nations; then follow the Accaouas, Worrows or Ouaraous, the Tairas, Salibas, Pinnacotaous and Paria tribe. Stedman, in his voyage to Surinam, mentions the Worrows as an extremely depraved



tribe, being lazy, filthy and brutal. The word Worrows, as the English pronounce it, resembles Gouaraoun or Ouaraoun, the name of the islanders who inhabit the islets situated at the mouth of the Orinoco. If, as Stedman asserts, there are in the neighbourhood of the Dutch possessions, natives who bear this name, it is probable that they belong to the same tribe as those settled at the mouth of the Orinoco, as the Caribs of the Antilles, now almost extinct, are identified with the Caribs of the continent. If the remark of Stedman be true, as to the depravity of the Ouaraous of Dutch Guiana, it is in my opinion merely the effect produced by the vicinity of Europeans, and the contagion of their vices; for my friends the Gouaraouns are, as I have already said, a people strikingly amiable from the mildness and vivacity of their manners. I cannot refrain from relating the following anecdote, which is highly honourable to their character; and as in Europe there is a propensity, not without reason, to accuse travellers of ornamenting their descriptions with fabulous episodes, to amuse the reader at the expence of truth, I shall mention by his name the European, well known at Martinico and Trinidad, who is the hero of the tale.

M. Lazare, a native of Provence, and trader of Martinico, in the beginning of the French revolution, but since residing at Port Spain, embarked on board a Spanish launch of the Orinoco,

which was to take him to San Thome de Angostura. He carried a very considerable venture with him, and had a young negro of fourteen years old as his servant.

When the boat arrived at the islets of the Orinoco, a Spanish sailor proposed to his comrades to murder Lazare and his negro and seize on the cargo. As all the rest were not so ferocious as the author of the proposal, it was decided that Lazare should be left on one of those desert islets; and fearing that he might escape by swimming to some adjacent one inhabited by the Gouaraouns, they bound him to a cocoa tree, thus condemning him to die of hunger. When those monsters returned on board the boat, they deliberated on what they could do with the young negro, and it was decided that he should be drowned. He was therefore thrown into the river; they also gave him some blows on the head with an oar, but these did not prevent him from diving and swimming to the islet on which his master had been left: fortunately the darkness of the night hindered them from seeing him when he reached the shore. At day-break the little negro roved about the island, and at length discovered his master, whom he supposed to be dead, fastened to the tree. Lazare's joy and surprize on this unexpected sight of his servant may be readily imagined: the cord which bound him having been untied, his first expression of gratitude was a positive promise of liberty to his slave. They



next went in search of some food to satisfy their hunger ; but perceiving traces of human footsteps, Lazare, shivering with fear, spoke to his negro of people who roast and eat men. After mature deliberation, they determined that from the certainty in which they were of starving, or of not being able to escape, they might just as well go and meet the men-eaters. Following the track they soon heard human voices ; and a little after saw men perched on the trees, in a species of nest proportioned to their sizes : *comé, comé*,\* said a Gouaraoun to Lazare, looking at him from his roost. "Heavens !" cried the Provençal, who understood Spanish, "they want to eat us." "No, Massa," replied the little negro, who had some knowledge of the English language, "they are only calling us to them." The Gouaraoun soon put an end to their anxiety by showing them two large pieces of fish, and inviting them by signs to climb up the tree, and partake of his meal. The little negro soon reached his host, but the lubberly Lazare not being able to climb they threw down several pieces of fish, some raw and others dressed which he devoured most voraciously.† At length the Gouaraouns descended from their trees, to talk with him. He that had cried, "*comé, comé*," spoke a little Spanish, and supposed Lazare to be a man

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\* Comer in Spanish signifies to eat, but the Indian intended it as English.

† Smoked or baked fish, is substituted for bread, with the raw fish.

who, disgusted with the slavery of social life, had come peacefully to enjoy the advantages of liberty amongst them. This Gouaraoun, who was a man of importance amongst his tribe, extolled the project highly, told Lazare he would give him a wife, dog and canoe, and that he would also teach him to shoot with a bow. But when the trader related his disastrous adventure, they testified a considerable degree of contempt for him. Having next requested them to convey him to Trinidad, and made them the most magnificent promises, the Gouaraoun told him, in bad Spanish, that he could not conceive why he did not prefer living with them, happy, tranquil and without masters, rather than to return to those villainous white people!

When they saw that he was determined to return to Trinidad, they equipped a pirogue to carry him there, without its ever occurring to them to stipulate for the price of his passage. At length, Lazare having arrived at Port Spain, gave the Gouaraouns some knives, hatchets, and a small cask of rum, and they departed satisfied. The reader will be impatient to know how he recompensed the slave who had saved his life: he will naturally follow him in his mind's eye, conducting the faithful negro before a magistrate, to establish his freedom. Vain illusion! the infamous Lazare being in want of money, a short time afterwards sold this very negro!!

The other tribes are very far from being so



estimable as the Gouaraouns. What were the manners of those islanders at the time of their conquest by the Europeans? The writers of that time represent them as anthropophagi, and excessively depraved. But can men be believed who had an interest in vilifying those whom they exterminated, because they would not permit themselves to be reduced to slavery? Still it is but too true, that the present tribes who live along the sea coasts, or on the banks of large rivers, are composed of very immoral and despicable men. The Accaouas, Worrows, Tuitas, Pinnacotuaus, Salives and Parias, present a picture of the human species in its last stage of degradation: we may therefore be well ashamed to partake the name of men with such beings. The first four of the six nations I have named, live on the extremity of the territories of Surinam and Demerara. When made drunk, they sell their wives and children. Their passion for spirituous liquors is generally so violent, that it is sometimes merely necessary to show them a bottle of it, and they become transported with joy and fury. They then seek their wives and children, and deliver them to the traders, who make slaves of them, or to libertines who thus recruit their seraglios. I was a witness to it at Demerara, in 1793. In this view the Indians are much beneath the negroes, who notwithstanding the state of ignorance and debasement to which they are reduced, nevertheless preserve the most tender attachment to their

wives, and especially for their children. But the greater part of the negroes have a vital energy and sentiment, far superior to the indolent aboriginal native of South America. To return to this unnatural custom of selling their own children, which is the most culpable, what shall we say of the Europeans, who having received an education, and been reared in the bosom of christianity, instigate through drunkenness to the commission of such a crime?

The Indians who inhabit the countries north of the Orinoco, and in the northern part of Trinidad, have not been united in missions, so that civilization has made but little progress amongst them. They live by the chase and fishing, scarcely cultivating what is sufficient to prevent them from starving. Unfortunately I have been but too well able to ascertain how much the neighbourhood of some worthless Europeans and swindlers from Barbadoes, who had settled in their vicinity, at the peace of Amiens, had contributed to corrupt those savages, who previous to their arrival, were neither vicious nor wicked. I well know it was in vain that some of those robbers endeavoured, in 1803, to procure women, by the means employed at Demerara; that one of them, assisted by his negro, having attempted to force an Indian female into his house, was obliged to let her go, when he saw an Indian aiming his arrow at him; and that all the bottles of rum he offered to the offended savage, to permit him to carry off his weeping



prey, made no impression on the former. The command of this part of the island (Toco and Cumana) being afterwards given by Governor Hislop, to W. T. a runaway surgeon from Barbadoes, Grenada and Tobago, for forgeries and swindling, that contemptible little tyrant forced a great many of those Indians to settle on a plantation which he obtained by the most dishonest means, and where he made them work as his slaves, in 1806 and 1807. Those who pleaded the cause of the Indians, were not only persecuted, but the crime having remained unpunished, others imitated his base example, particularly the swindler H.....; who, when I left Trinidad, had a considerable number of Indians, slaves in fact, on his plantation.

This treatment has so exasperated the Indians, that many have sought refuge in the woods of the interior, where they live in the manner of Maroon negroes, others escaped in their canoes to the continent, where they have become the implacable enemies of the British name. But historical impartiality requires me to add, that this atrocious conduct towards the Indians, excited the indignation of the respectable part of the British population of this island.

This subject gives me an opportunity of saying a few words on the relations of the British with the indigenous inhabitants, in all parts of America where the former have effected establishments. In general, the natives detest them, not

because they are more oppressed by them than any other European nation, but owing to the disdainful contempt with which they are treated by them. Now, no one feels contempt more keenly than a savage; so that a man must be saturated with pride, to behave so as to make a poor Indian feel his inferiority. For a long time past, the Spaniards used to protect and treat them with justice; as for the French, we treat them like children, playing and joking with them: and, in spite of their nudity and strange costume, we admit them to our tables; they are allowed to speak to us with familiarity, we call each other gossip, consequently they prefer us to all other nations.

The Arrouagas or Arroouaks are considered the handsomest nation of Guiana: they are less copper coloured than their neighbours; which may result from their not tattooing themselves with arnotto. Their manners are social, and they have the reputation of keeping their promises faithfully: they are friendly to Europeans, and very humane; but this does not prevent them from taking their neighbours as slaves, and selling them. The Arrouagas carry on a considerable trade with the Spaniards and Dutch, in balsam of copaiva, arnotto, sarsaparilla, sassafras, liarie roots, vanilla, dye-stuffs, a kind of ebony, wax and honey, hammocks, baskets, monkeys, parrots and other birds; they take in exchange fire-arms, some light stuffs, combs, looking-glasses, toys, hatchets, knives, saws, nails, &c.

The insular Caribs are almost extinct; there



are not more than a score of their families in the Island of St. Vincent; three families in that of Tobago, and seven or eight families in Trinidad, where they had retired, when they abandoned the island of Dominica, during the American war, which terminated in 1783. These last call themselves Califournans: and though I have had many of them in my service as hunters, fishers and servants,\* I never could learn the etymology of Califournan: all they could inform me about it was, that they came from a country far, far, far! I give their own expression. They are in general a very handsome race of men, and both active and intelligent. Some of their women are also very pretty, and in general all are well made. These Califournans are polygamists, like the chief part of the Indians; and they have this in particular, that when one of them marries the eldest daughter of a family, he has a right to espouse the younger sisters, according as they arrive at the age of puberty. Many travellers have been fond of describing a very singular custom of the Caribs; stating that when a woman is delivered, she makes caudle for her husband, who, they say, places himself in his hammock, groans, and, in short, acts the lying-in person. The fact is, that when a female Carib finds the pains of labour coming on, she goes to the nearest stream, accompanied by another woman: here she is delivered, regulates her child, and bathes

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\* I brought a young individual of this tribe to Europe.

with it in the stream. When returned to her hut, after placing the infant in a hammock, she makes some broth. During this time, the husband swings and jolts in his hammock as usual, and takes some of the broth which she has made : but it is not true that they groan and ape the act of child-birth. The Caribs know that the whites have invented this tale, and therefore consider them notorious liars !

The difference which exists between the Caribs and the other tribes of the united provinces of Venezuela ; the great physical and intellectual superiority of the former, appears to prove that they have had a different and more noble origin. Though they were as far removed from civilization as the Parias, when the Europeans first arrived, still the Caribs considered, and to this day think themselves a privileged race. They speak of the other savages with as much contempt and disdain, as the ignorant and illiberal part of a certain insular nation speak of all other people. However unjust the pretensions of the Caribs are, however ridiculous savages may be who pretend to exercise a paramount right over other savages like themselves, it is nevertheless true that the hereditary habits of command on one side, and of servitude and fear on the other, have produced amongst the inhabitants of the forests the same effects as between civilized nations. Among the first, they have engendered frankness, courage and generosity, qualities which result from the



consciousness of strength and power, with the abuse of them which men are liable to make, who have naturally a bad disposition; and amongst the persecuted and degraded tribes, perfidy and cowardice, flattery, and egotism.

According to the principle I venture to adopt, the Arroouaks, Guaraouns and Guahiros of the Rio de la Hache, must be considered as descendants of the Carib nation. Every thing induces a belief that those are remains of the conquering race; and that the Salives, Chaymas, Ottomaques and Parias, belong to an indigenous and conquered race. It is a circumstance well worth the most serious meditations of those who study the philosophical history of the human species, to see savage tribes living in the same climate, using nearly the same food, each as little influenced at present by European civilization, yet completely distinguished physically and morally by features as opposite as those which separate the Caucasian race from the Mogul, and the latter from the European, named by zoologists the Arab Caucasian race.

Much has been said of the Black Caribs of St. Vincent's, and they have been the subject of many stories and fables. I have had the means of becoming acquainted with them, having passed some months in that island, during the civil wars in the French colonies. It appears that the English established themselves there in 1672; and that they had sent negroes to it in 1675. According

to Sir William Young, a slave ship coming from the coast of Benin, laden with Moco negroes, was wrecked that very year on Bequia, an islet situated two leagues from St. Vincent's, where the shipwrecked negroes retired, and were subsequently joined by a great number of Maroon negroes from the adjacent islands. It is related in the French colonies, that though those negroes had been hospitably received by the Caribs, they exterminated their hosts at night, to possess themselves of their wives and the country. But according to the respectable authority of Sir William Young, this fact is controverted. I have myself heard the baronet give a very different account of that event, as he had heard it from his father, formerly governor of the island, where his virtues and those of his son are proverbial. According to Sir William Young, the Caribs made slaves of the negroes; but finding they were becoming more numerous than themselves, they resolved to put all the male children to death. The commencement of this barbarity caused a revolt amongst the negroes, who conquered in the conflict.

The first use made of their success was to exterminate a great number of their masters, and seize on their wives and daughters, from whom proceeds the mixed breed known by the name of *Black Caribs*. There still exists in the island of Saint Vincent some families of red Caribs, who have never contracted an alliance with their black-brethren, from whom they keep at a distance, and



who did not interfere in the war between the latter and the British, in 1795 : they live there under their protection to this day, whilst the blacks have been transported to the Island of Rattan, in the Bay of Honduras.

The reader will not perhaps be displeased with the account of a visit I paid to the Black Caribs. In January, 1793, I embarked at the east end of Saint Lucia, in a canoe eighteen feet long, and two and a half in its greatest breadth : it was navigated by three Caribs. The friend who had procured this frail conveyance for me, had warned me that the Caribs would inquire if I could swim, and that it was necessary I should reply in the negative ; in which case I might be tranquil, as they would save me if the canoe was upset or wrecked. Having left St. Lucia, at midnight, we arrived at the Grand Sable, the principal wharf of the Caribs, on the following morning about eleven o'clock.

The sea is always agitated by the north winds during this season, in the Antilles, and breaks with fury on the eastern coasts of those islands. Though the weather was otherwise very fine, I was so wetted by the waves which had broken over me, that I resembled a statue of salt. However, our passage was made without any accident. When the canoe was about one hundred yards from the shore, on which is a reef of coral, I saw a multitude of savages plunge into the sea and swim towards us. There was a frightful surf,

the sea was all foam; I saw nothing but the heads of the Caribs, men and women, who appeared like so many Tritons and Nereids. A painter or poet might have made fine pictures from this scene: on the shore were seen groups of Caribs, men, women and children; behind them a smiling plain, and two limpid streams which watered it, terminated by a chain of mountains, the chief part of them pointed, and covered with the beautiful vegetation of the climate. The savages pressed round the pirogue, seized it on both sides, some with their right, others with their left hand, while my three travelling companions jumped into the water, their favourite element, dived and reappeared; while I alone in the canoe, only wanted a trident to have all the air of a Neptune borne on the waves by the inhabitants of the ocean! At length, thanks to those able and intrepid swimmers, the canoe thus raised above the waves, cleared the coral bank without touching it, and on gaining the beach I found myself in the midst of a great crowd, the colour of the men was copper, inclining to black: nearly all were armed with bows and musquets, they pressed around me, to look at a white man, dressed in a light coloured surtout, and whose hair was for the moment whitened, at the age of nineteen, by a quantity of sea salt that had formed on it during the passage. I saw a Carib who had a small looking-glass hanging about his neck, and requested him to permit me to look at myself: on seeing the little chrystals that



whitened my hair, I could not refrain from laughing heartily, and was joined in it by the savages, that accompanied me to the owner of the canoe, who expressed a wish to be my host. It being necessary to cross the fine river I had seen from the canoe, I stripped myself to bathe; some young and handsome female Caribs, and a troop of young males threw water on me, and we began to chat as if we had known each other for years. The pleasure of having escaped from a gang of robbers, in Saint Lucia, who had conspired to murder me, the bath, sprightliness of my hosts, the view of a beautiful country, and an air perfumed with the odoriferous plants of the Caribs' gardens, situated on both banks of this refreshing stream, soon restored my strength, which had been exhausted with vexation, and by more than one bad night's rest. I soon arrived at the house of Larose, the name of my host. It was only a short time before I had seen the Indians of Trinidad, almost strangers to agriculture; but here the properties of the Caribs were divided by hedges of orange trees, perfectly well kept, and their gardens filled with all the beautiful plants of the country. Their houses had an appearance of elegant simplicity, and were provided with all that could be necessary for comfort and convenience; that of Larose was the handsomest of this village; it was built of squared timber, and covered with shingles; a gallery ran in front, and it was divided into three rooms, of which that in the

middle served as a saloon. Here a hammock was slung for me, and after we entered Larose, shaking my hand in the English style, said, "you are now at home, therefore make yourself as easy and comfortable as you can." After this compliment he introduced to me one of his wives, who was very well dressed, like the women of colour in our colonies. "*Bon jou mouché*, good morning to you sir," said she, making a low curtesy, "*bon jou, ma chée; et bon Dié! qui ce qui mené vous dans pays cy! Si mouée pas trompé, vous milatresse la Martineq?*" "Good morning, my dear; and in God's name! what has brought you to this place! If I am not mistaken you are a mulatto of Martinico?"—*Et oui, ché metre*; "So I am, my dear sir," she replied with a melancholy and languishing look.

"I am going out for some moments to settle some business," said Larose to me, "and shall leave this prattler to attend you during my absence." I then prevailed on the lady to sit beside my hammock, and relate her adventures amongst the Caribs. The history of poor Marguerite is not long. Ten years ago, when at the age of twenty, she was then very pretty, and had not much predilection for black lovers. Larose, who traded with Saint Lucia and Martinico, paid his addresses to her, and proposed taking her with him to Saint Vincent's, where she would be a great lady amongst the Caribs. She suffered herself to be



persuaded : but, alas ! the chaste Helen was not aware that there are Caribs who have as many as three or four wives ! “How do they manage, my friend,” said I, with a significant smile, “to make you all happy ?” “Ah, my dear youth,” she replied, with tears in her eyes, “look out at the window, and you will see three huts in the garden there.”— “So that in every three weeks you are a widow for a fortnight ?” “Yes,” said she, pressing my hand and rolling her eyes affectionately : “it was so at first ; but it is long since Larose has ceased to think of me !”

Looking out I saw the black bashaw in the gallery with his two favourites, who were laughing heartily at our dialogue : happily poor Marguerite, whose back was turned to the door, did not see them. Entering soon after, “come, come, *carrion*,” said he, “instead of prating with this white, and making love to him, you would do much better to prepare our dinner. There is a fowl I have just killed, and some fish : make us also a crab soup.” I endeavoured to prevail on Larose to treat his old favourite with less severity, but his only reply was a loud laugh. He next introduced to me his two young sultanas, one of whom was about seventeen ; both were handsome, and formed like nymphs, the whole of their dress consisted of chintz petticoats, and Madras yellow, green, and red handkerchiefs on their heads, which seemed very well suited to their bronze complexions.

They now began to prepare a salad, since the handsome cut glasses, and make punch. During this time M. Larose smoked his cigar and swang in his hammock; looking somewhat maliciously at me, he gave warning that those two, pointing to his young protégées, "were forbidden fruit!" A great many Caribs now arrived, and I had to shake hands with each of them, according as they came in to see me: they sat down round the room, while Larose and myself placed ourselves at table, attended by his three concubines. In addition to the crab soup, we had stewed and fried fish, a roasted fowl with salad; bananas, cassava, and potatoes, were substituted for bread: excellent fruits, wine, rum and beer, covered the table after the repast. Such was the dinner of a Carib trader; it was served on very fine white table linen, and in dishes and plates of Wedgewood's ware, with silver forks, spoons, &c.

We had just finished our meal, when I saw a Carib enter, of about six feet high; his dress consisted of a blue check shirt, and a round hat ornamented with a plume of variegated feathers. He carried a musquet in his hand, had a large sabre by his side, while a silver case hung to his belt. The stranger had the look and air of one accustomed to command. Larose rising mysteriously, whispered, "this is Captain Laval, our king."

I rose to salute his majesty: he advanced and offered me his hand, complimenting me on my arrival in



his states, which had an extent of five leagues long by three in breadth! "My residence is some distance from hence," said he: "I was hunting in the neighbourhood, when I heard of your arrival: if I had not been so far from home, I would have put on my red breeches and uniform of a French marshal, which the king of France sent me with the order of Saint Louis, during the American war." He now invited me to be seated, and took the place of his lieutenant general, Larose, who remained standing respectfully, without uttering a word. The other Caribs, however, did not rise on the entrance of their chief, nor did they show him any kind of honour. But Larose was half-civilized, and a courtier. "Be seated," said the prince to him; "I am going to assist in finishing your mess." When he had satisfied his appetite, we toasted and drank together; after which he recounted his feats during the American war: it was then that M. de Bouillé had sent him the uniform, cross, and decorations of a French marshal, with a letter from Louis XVI. After repeating the above circumstance, he took the silver box which hung by his side, opened it, and showed me a letter from the king, written, I have no doubt, at Martinico, in which that monarch thanked gossip Lavalley for the good and agreeable services which he had rendered him: the monarch next insisted that I should sleep at his house. By this time I saw clearly he was tormented with an anxiety to display himself

to me in all his pomp ; I therefore acceded to his request. Presented to his family as the aid de camp of a general, I was received with great honours. His house was built like that of Larose, but larger ; he had five or six negro slaves, who cultivated coffee, cotton, arnotto, cocoa and provisions. Three women, by whom he had ten children, of different ages, composed his family. Whilst I was chatting with his sons, who spoke French and Creole-English, lo and behold his majesty re-enter, resplendent in magnificence ! On his bronzed front was a large cocked hat, with a white feather, a cockade of the same colour, surmounted with a button of German pebble as large as a coffee cup, ordered to be made expressly for him by Louis XVI. and which had cost one hundred thousand crowns ! His coat was that of a general officer, with enormous epaulettes, and laced on every seam : from one of the button-holes of this dress, a gold cross was suspended by a red ribband, it was the insignia of St. Louis ; a large star of gold and silver on the breast, convinced me that he was also a knight of the Holy Roman Empire ! His majesty wore two other orders, of which I could not ascertain the names ; a red waistcoat bedaubed with gold ; scarlet breeches laced on the seams ; boots with red morocco tops, and ornamented with an enormous pair of copper spurs, which had once been gilt, completed this singular costume ; he wore no



stockings; but collars with little bells, such as are put on lap-dogs, ornamented his ancles!

I really believe that there never was a happier sovereign than Lavallo thought himself at this moment: he paraded about the gallery: directing his piercing sight towards the sea, he saw in the twinkling of an eye, the extent of his territories from east to west, and from north to south. Supper was announced by a discharge of artillery, which consisted of two swivels. He constantly took out his snuff-box to offer me a pinch, and provoked at my not admiring that beautiful trinket, he desired me to examine it well. It was of an enormous size and silver gilt, ornamented with a bad portrait of Louis XVI. set with German pebbles, another article made expressly for him, and which he also believed to have cost one hundred thousand crowns. But he shewed me some arms that were really magnificent, and from the Versailles manufactory.

After having passed a good night in a royal hammock, I received, in the morning, a visit from my friend Larose, who came to conduct me to M. Augier, a French proprietor in the environs of Kingston. All Lavallo's cavalry consisted of a mule and an ass, which he offered to escort me in the most gracious manner; but I preferred performing the journey on foot, as far as the residence of Mr. Clapham, the nearest proprietor to the Caribs, and whose good nature was so highly praised by Larose

that I took my chance, stranger and unknown as I was, to request the loan of a horse. Though I was not very genteelly dressed, I was received in the kindest manner by Mr. Clapham, who not only invited me to breakfast with him, but lent me a horse to take me to my destination. I was then far from suspecting that this unfortunate gentleman, who was so eulogized by the Caribs, should be, two years afterwards, the first victim immolated by those very men! It does not form a part of my plan to give the history of this war of the Caribs against the inhabitants of St. Vincent's. I must, however, do the latter the justice to say, that they had done nothing to provoke the aggressions of the savages. This colony is not like some others, peopled with the refuse and scum of the British nation. Though it has belonged to Great Britain for a long time, it is only since the American war it has acquired its actual colonial importance. The governors, Sir William Young, and Mr. Melville, who have made so many improvements there, were men of rare virtue and merit: such characters have always a great influence on the manners of a new society; so that this has been composed of respectable persons who went from Europe, Antigua, and St. Christopher's, colonies composed of people of good dispositions.

General Sir Ralph Abercrombie put an end, in 1797, to this cruel war, which had been com-



menced in 1795, when, as already observed, all the Black Caribs of St. Vincent's who remained alive, were transported, in British vessels, to the Island of Rattan.

Those Caribs have adopted many customs of the Red Caribs, amongst others that of flattening the foreheads of new-born infants.\* But they are not indolent like them, and they surpass the Indians on the score of intellect. Each family has its territorial property, which is inclosed with hedges, and carefully cultivated. The men apply themselves as much to agriculture as the women. They do not like to be called negroes, and consider this term as a gross insult, no doubt because the negroes, their neighbours, are in slavery. It is flattering to them to be called Caribs, and it is

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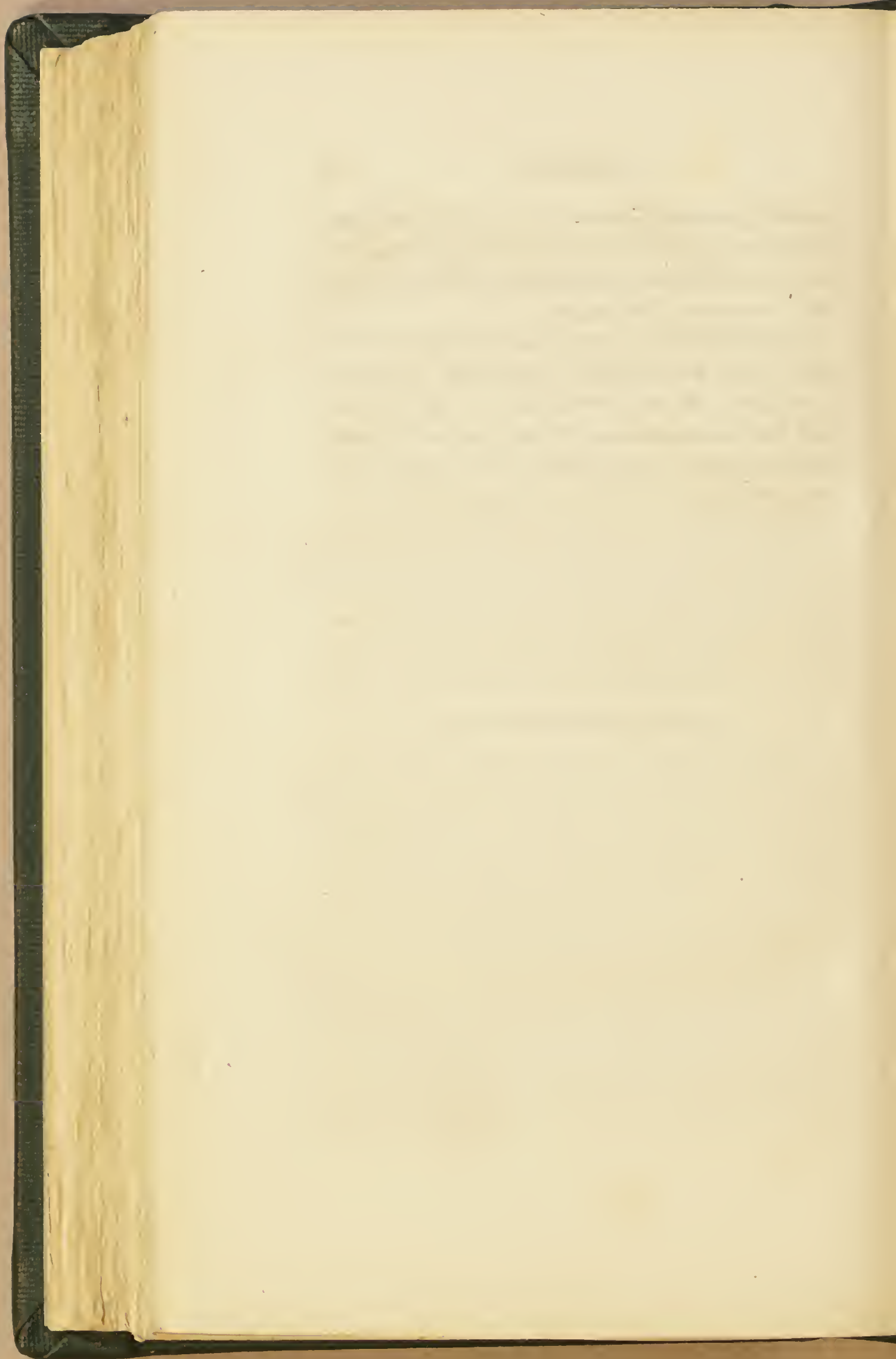
\* This singular process is performed in the following manner : when a Carib mother feels the pains of child-birth she proceeds, as before described, to the nearest river ; for all their villages that I have seen, are either on the banks or very contiguous to a stream of running water. After the ceremony of bathing is over, and the parties reach their hut, they place the head of the child between two very smooth boards, as far as the root of the nose ; these boards are about eight inches long, and fastened together with cords applied at each end ; they are not removed from the infant's head for nine days, which is perhaps one reason why so many children die of lock jaw and convulsions at this tender age. After the tenth day the boards are only applied during the night, but they are not totally discontinued till the period of weaning, which usually takes place at the age of fifteen or eighteen months. Nearly all the Caribs who have embraced christianity have renounced this strange custom.

probably for the purpose of resembling the latter still more, that besides the flattening of the forehead, they have also adopted the custom of tattooing themselves with arnotto.

The Black Caribs have not embraced christianity: the few religious ideas they have, are a mixture of the Fetishism of the negroes, and the superstitions of the ancient Caribs: like the latter, they believe in a good and a bad principle.

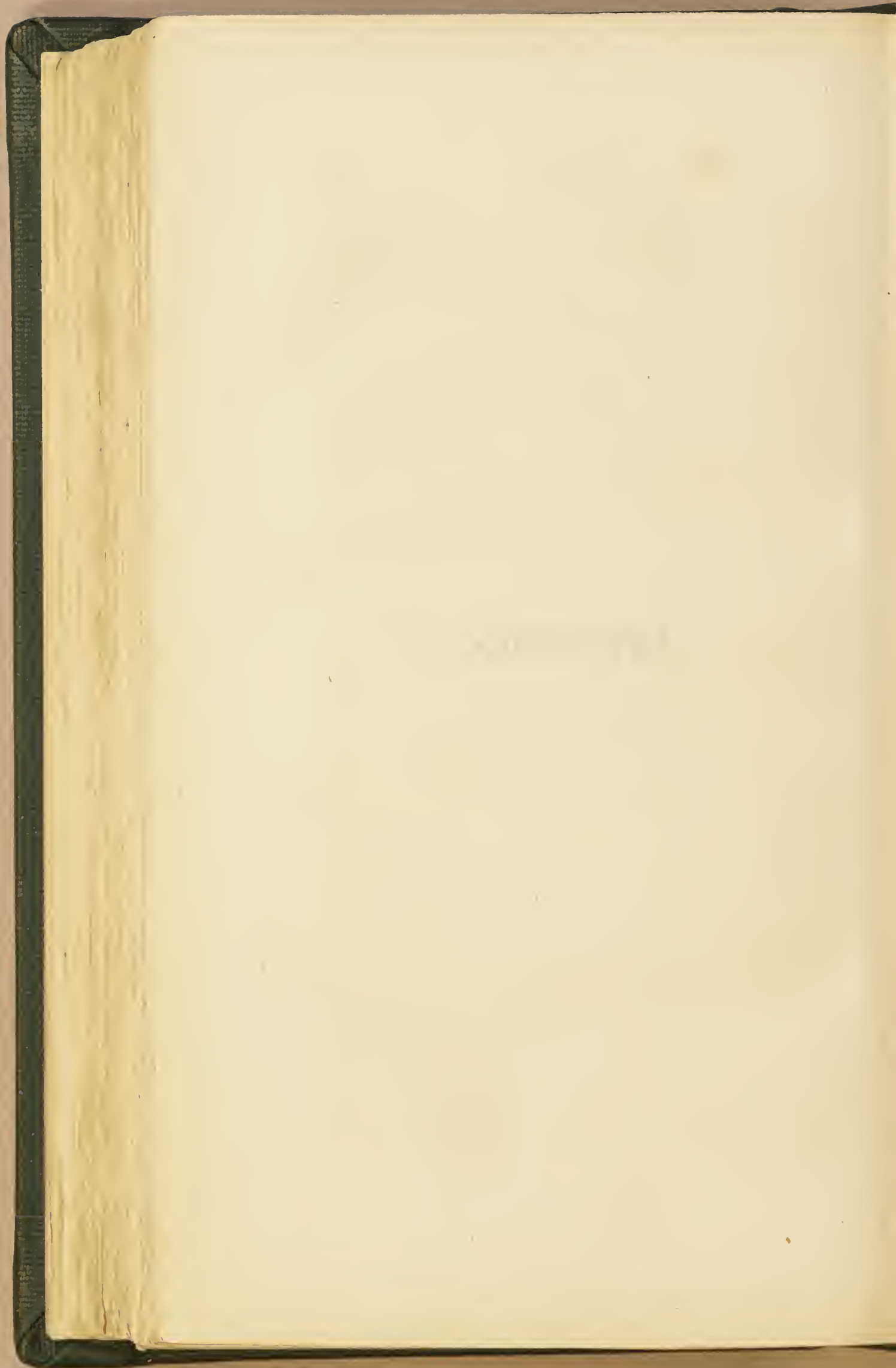
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**APPENDIX.**





## APPENDIX.

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### OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS, &c.

*Alluded to in the Introduction, illustrative of the foregoing Work, and to which the attention of the Public is particularly requested.*

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#### No. I.

Proclamation of General SIR THOMAS PICTON, Governor of Trinidad, first circulated amongst the Spanish Colonies near that Island, in 1797, and which has been already quoted in the Introduction.\*

By virtue of an official paper, which I, the governor of this island of Trinidad, have received from the Right Honourable Henry Dundas, minister of His Britannic Majesty, for Foreign Affairs, dated April 7, 1797, which I here publish, in obedience to orders, and for the use which your Excellencies may draw from its publication, in order that you may communicate its tenour, which is literally as follows. “The object which, at present, I desire most particularly to recommend to your attention, is, the means which might be most adapted to liberate the people of the continent near to the Island of Trinidad,

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\* These important papers, with the exception of the extracts from the Supreme Chief's Speech, are reprinted from the Exposé, and another book, containing public documents, published by Mr. William Walton, who has done much towards elucidating the past and present condition of Spanish America.



from the oppressive and tyrannic system, which supports, with so much rigour, the monopoly of commerce, under the title of exclusive registers, which their government licences demand; also to draw the greatest advantages possible, and which the local situation of the island presents, by opening a direct and free communication with the other parts of the world, without prejudice to the commerce of the British nation. In order to fulfil this intention with greater facility, it will be prudent for your Excellency to animate the inhabitants of Trinidad, in keeping up the communication which they had with those of Terra Firma, previous to the reduction of that island, under the assurance, that they will find there an entrepôt, or general magazine of every sort of goods whatever. To this end, His Britannic Majesty has determined, in council, to grant freedom to the port of Trinidad, with a direct trade to Great Britain.

With regard to the hopes you entertain of raising the spirits of those persons, with whom you are in correspondence, towards animating the inhabitants, to resist the oppressive authority of their government, I have little more to say, than that they may be certain, that whenever they are in that disposition, they may receive at your hands, all the succours to be expected from H. B. Majesty; be it with forces, or with arms and ammunition to any extent; with the assurance, that the views of H. B. Majesty, go no further than to secure to them their independence, without pretending to any sovereignty over their country, nor even to interfere in the privileges of the people, nor in their political, civil, or religious rights.

(Signed) THOMAS PICTON.

Port Spain, Trinidad,  
June 26, 1797.

## No. II.

IT is the opinion of our immortal countryman LOCKE, “that all legitimate government is derived from the consent of the people, that men are naturally equal, and that no one has a right to injure another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions, and that no man, in civil society, ought to be subject to the arbitrary will of others, but only to known and established laws, made by general consent, for the common benefit. That no taxes are to be levied on the people, without the consent of the majority, given by themselves, or by their deputies. That the ruling power ought to govern by declared and received laws, and not by extemporary dictates, and undetermined resolutions. That kings and princes, magistrates, and rulers of every class, have no just authority but what is delegated to them by the people; and which when not employed for their benefit, the people have always a right to resume in whatever hands it may be placed.

“That revolutions happen not upon every little mismanagement of public affairs. Great mistakes in the ruling part, many wrong and inconvenient laws, and all the slips of human frailty, will be borne by the people without mutiny or murmur. But if a long train of abuses, prevarications, and artifices, all tending the same way, make the design visible to the people, and they cannot but feel what they lie under, and see whither they are going, it is not to be wondered, that they should then rouse themselves, and endeavour to put the rule into such hands which may secure to them the ends for which government was at first erected; and without which, ancient names and specious forms, are so far from being better, that they are much worse than the state of nature, or pure anarchy, the inconveniencies being as great, and as near, but the remedy further off, and more difficult.”



## No. III.

## ACT OF INDEPENDENCE.

*In the Name of the All-powerful God,*

WE the Representatives of the United Provinces of Caracas, Cumana, Varinas, Margarita, Barcelona, Merida, and Truxillo, forming the American Confederation of Venezuela, in the South Continent, in Congress assembled, considering the full and absolute possession of our Rights, which we recovered justly and legally from the 19th of April, 1810, in consequence of the occurrences in Bayonne, and the occupation of the Spanish Throne by conquest, and the succession of a new Dynasty, constituted without our consent; are desirous, before we make use of those Rights, of which we have been deprived by force for more than three centuries, but now restored to us by the political order of human events, to make known to the world the reasons which have emanated from these same occurrences, and which authorise us in the free use we are now about to make of our own Sovereignty.

We do not wish, nevertheless, to begin by alledging the rights inherent in every conquered country, to recover its state of property and independence; we generously forget the long series of ills, injuries, and privations, which the sad right of conquest has indistinctly caused, to all the descendants of the Discoverers, Conquerors, and Settlers of these Countries, plunged into a worse state by the very same cause that ought to have favoured them; and, drawing a veil over the three hundred years of Spanish dominion in America, we will now only present to view the authentic and well-known facts, which ought to have wrested from one world, the right over the other, by the inversion, disorder, and conquest, that have already dissolved the Spanish Nation.

This disorder has increased the ills of America, by

rendering void its claims and remonstrances, enabling the Governors of Spain to insult and oppress this part of the Nation, thus leaving it without the succour and guarantee of the laws.

It is contrary to order, impossible to the Government of Spain, and fatal to the welfare of America, that the latter, possessed of a range of country infinitely more extensive, and a population incomparably more numerous, should depend and be subject to a peninsular corner of the European continent.

The cessions and abdications at Bayonne, the Revolutions of the Escorial and Aranjuez, and the Orders of the Royal Substitute, the Duke of Berg, sent to America, suffice to give virtue to the rights, which till then the Americans had sacrificed to the unity and integrity of the Spanish Nation.

Venezuela was the first to acknowledge, and generously to preserve, this integrity; not to abandon the cause of its brothers, as long as the same retained the least hope of salvation.

America was called into a new existence, since she could, and ought, to take upon herself the charge of her own fate and preservation; as Spain might acknowledge, or not, the rights of a King, who had preferred his own existence to the dignity of the Nation over which he governed.

All the Bourbons concurred to the invalid stipulations of Bayonne, abandoning Spain, against the will of the People;—they violated, disdained, and trampled on the sacred duty they had contracted with the Spaniards of both Worlds, when with their blood and treasure they had placed them on the Throne, in despite of the House of Austria. By such a conduct, they were left disqualified and incapable of governing a Free People, whom they delivered up like a flock of slaves.

Notwithstanding our protests, our moderation, generosity, and the inviolability of our principles, contrary to the wishes of our brethren in Europe, we were declared



in a state of rebellion ; we were blockaded ; war was declared against us ; agents were sent amongst us, to excite us one against the other, endeavouring to take away our credit with the other Nations of Europe, by imploring their assistance to oppress us.

Without taking the least notice of our reasons, without presenting them to the impartial judgment of the world, and without any other judges than our own enemies, we are condemned to a mournful incommunication with our brethren : and, to add contempt to calumny, empowered agents are named for us, against our own express will, that in their Cortes they may arbitrarily dispose of our interests, under the influence and force of our enemies.

In order to crush and suppress the effects of our Representation, when they were obliged to grant it to us, we were submitted to a paltry and diminutive scale ; and the form of election was subjected to the passive voice of the Municipal Bodies, degraded by the despotism of the Governors : which amounted to an insult on our plain dealing and good faith, more than to a consideration of our incontestible political importance.

Always deaf to the cries of justice on our part, the Governments of Spain have endeavoured to discredit all our efforts, by declaring as criminal, and stamping with infamy, and rewarding with the scaffold and confiscation, every attempt, which at different periods some Americans have made, for the felicity of their country : as was that which lately our own security dictated to us, that we might not be driven into a state of disorder which we foresaw, and hurried to that horrid fate which we are about to remove for ever from before us. By means of such atrocious policy, they have succeeded in making our brethren insensible to our misfortunes ; in arming them against us ; in erasing from their bosoms the tender impressions of friendship, of consanguinity ; and converting into enemies a part of our own great family.

In this mournful alternative we have remained three years, in a state of political indecision and ambiguity, so

fatal and dangerous, that this alone would suffice to authorise the resolution, which the faith of our promises and the bonds of fraternity had caused us to defer, till necessity has obliged us to go beyond what we at first proposed, impelled by the hostile and unnatural conduct of the Governments of Spain, which have disburdened us of our conditional oath, by which circumstance, we are called to the august representation we now exercise.

But we, who glory in grounding our proceedings on better principles, and not wishing to establish our felicity on the misfortunes of our fellow-beings, do consider and declare as friends, companions of our fate, and participators of our felicity, those who, united to us by the ties of blood, language, and religion, have suffered the same evils in the anterior order of things, provided they acknowledge our *absolute independence* of the same, and of any other foreign power whatever; that they aid us to sustain it with their lives, fortune, and sentiments; declaring and acknowledging them (as well as to every other nation), in war enemies, and in peace friends, brothers, and co-patriots.

In consequence of all these solid, public, and incontestible reasons of policy, which so powerfully urge the necessity of recovering our natural dignity, restored to us by the order of events; and in compliance with the imprescriptible rights enjoyed by nations, to destroy every pact, agreement, or association, which does not answer the purposes for which governments were established; we believe that we cannot, nor ought not, to preserve the bonds which hitherto kept us united to the Government of Spain; and that, like all the other nations of the world, we are free, and authorised not to depend on any other authority than our own, and to take amongst the powers of the earth the place of equality which the Supreme Being and Nature assign to us, and to which we are called by the succession of human events, and urged by our own good and utility.

Notwithstanding we are aware of the difficulties that



attend, and the obligations imposed upon us, by the rank we are about to take in the political order of the world ; as well as the powerful influence of forms and habitudes, to which unfortunately we have been accustomed ; we at the same time know, that the shameful submission to them, when we can throw them off, would be still more ignominious for us, and more fatal to our posterity, than our long and painful slavery ; and that it now becomes an indispensable duty to provide for our own preservation, security, and felicity, by essentially varying all the forms of our former constitution.

In consequence whereof, considering, by the reasons thus alledged, that we have satisfied the respect which we owe to the opinions of the human race, and the dignity of other nations, in the number of whom we are about to enter, and on whose communication and friendship we rely : We, the Representatives of the United Provinces of Venezuela, calling on the SUPREME BEING to witness the justice of our proceedings and the rectitude of our intentions, do implore his divine and celestial help ; and ratifying, at the moment in which we are born to the dignity which his Providence restores to us, the desire we have of living and dying free, and of believing and defending the holy Catholic and Apostolic Religion of Jesus Christ. We, therefore, in the name and by the will and authority which we hold from the virtuous People of Venezuela, DO declare solemnly to the world, that its united Provinces are, and ought to be, from this day, by act and right, Free, Sovereign, and Independent States ; and that they are absolved from every submission and dependence on the Throne of Spain, or on those who do, or may call themselves its Agents and Representatives ; and that a free and independent State, thus constituted, has full power to take that form of Government which may be conformable to the general will of the People—to declare war, make peace, form alliances, regulate treaties of commerce, limits, and navigation ; and to do and transact every act, in like manner as other free and

independent States. And that this, our solemn Declaration, may be held valid, firm, and durable, we hereby mutually bind each Province to the other, and pledge our lives, fortunes, and the sacred tie of our national honour. Done in the Federal Palace of Caracas; signed by our hands, sealed with the great Provisional Seal of the Confederation, and countersigned by the Secretary of Congress, this 5th day of July, 1811, the first of our Independence.

[Here follow the signatures of forty deputies; also a confirmatory decree signed by the President and other principal Ministers of the Republic.]

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No. IV.

Correspondence between General Hodgson, Governor of Curaçoa, and General Bolivar of Venezuela, respecting certain Spanish prisoners, and in which those who have either through ignorance or malevolence charged the Supreme Chief with cruelty, will find a complete and circumstantial refutation of their calumnies.

Government House, Curaçoa, September 4, 1813.

Sir,

Having been informed that many European Spaniards, are now confined in the prisons of La Guira and Caracas, in consequence of the part they took in the late unfortunate disturbances of Venezuela, and who possibly may suffer death; I have the honour to address you on this subject. Although I am perfectly sure, from the well known humanity of your character, that you will take no measure of that kind, nevertheless, as there may be persons vested with the authority, in the above places, who may not be possessed of your generous sentiments, and who may, perhaps, from erroneous principles, recur to acts of cruelty, I esteem it a duty of humanity to intercede in their favour, and request you to grant them pass-



ports to leave the province. The brave are always merciful.

I am, &c.

(Signed) J. HODGSON,

To Don Simon Bolivar, &c. &c. &c.

#### ANSWER.

Head Quarters, Valencia, October 2, 1813.

Sir,

I have the honour to answer your Excellency's letter, of the 4th of September, ultimo, which I have this day received, delayed, without doubt, by causes of which I am ignorant, on its way from your island to La Guira.

The attention which I ought to pay to a British officer, and to the cause of America, place me under the necessity of manifesting to your Excellency, the unhappy causes of the conduct, which in spite of myself, I observe to the Spaniards, who, within the last year, have wrapt Venezuela in ruins, by committing crimes which ought to have been thrown into eternal oblivion, if the necessity of justifying, to the eyes of the world, the death war which we have adopted, did not oblige us to draw them to light, from the scaffolds and horrid dungeons, with which they are covered, and to place them before your Excellency.

A continent, separated from Spain by immense seas, more populous and richer than her; subject, for three centuries, to a degrading and tyrannical dependence, hearing, in the year 1810, of the dissolution of the governments of Spain, by the occupancy of the French armies, placed itself in motion, to preserve itself from a similar fate, and to escape the anarchy and confusion which threatened it. Venezuela, the first, institutes a Junta preserving the rights of Ferdinand VII., and in order to wait the decisive issue of the war. It offers to the Spaniards desirous of emigrating, a fraternal asylum; it invests many of them with the supreme magistracy, and preserves in their offices, all who were placed in those of

the greatest influence and importance. Evident proofs of the views of union which animated the people of Venezuela: views, to which the Spaniards, deceitfully, corresponded; most of whom, abused this public confidence by black perfidy.

In fact, Venezuela adopted the above measure, impelled by irresistible necessity. Under circumstances less critical, provinces of Spain less important than herself, had erected governing Juntas to save themselves from disorder and tumult. And, was it not equally the duty of Venezuela, to provide a shelter from so many calamities, and to secure her existence against the rapid vicissitudes of Europe? Was it not even injurious to the Spaniards of the Peninsula, to remain exposed to the troubles and confusion, which were about to succeed to the loss of the acknowledged government; ought they not even to have been grateful, for our thus obtaining for them a safe asylum? Could any one have thought, that a rigorous blockade and cruel hostilities, would have been the returns of so much generosity?

Confident, as was Venezuela, that Spain had been completely subjected, and as was also believed in every other part of America, she adopted the above measure; which even, before, she had a right to have done, authorized by the example of the provinces of the Peninsula, with whom she was declared equal in rights and in political representation. The Regency afterwards was formed in a tumultuous manner in Cadiz, the only point where the French eagles had not penetrated; from whence it fulminated its destructive decrees against a free people, who, without any obligation, had maintained their relations and national integrity, with a nation, of whom they were naturally independent.

Such was the generous spirit which animated the first revolution of America, one effected without blood, odium, or vengeance. Might not Venezuela, Buenos Ayres, and New Granada, have displayed their just resentments for so much injury and violence, by destroying those



Viceroy, Governors, and Regents ; all those rulers, executioners of their own species, who, gratified with the destruction of the Americans, made the most illustrious and virtuous perish in horrid dungeons ; who spoiled the good man of the fruit of his labour, and in general, persecuted industry, the useful arts, and every thing else, that could alleviate the horrors of our slavery ?

For three centuries, did America groan under this tyranny, the worst that ever afflicted the human race ; three centuries, did she lament her fatal riches which were so attractive to her oppressors ; and when just Providence presented her with the unexpected opportunity, of breaking her chains, far from thinking of avenging these outrages, she invites even her own enemies, by offering to share with them her gifts and asylum.

On now beholding almost every region of the new world, busied in a cruel and ruinous war ; on seeing discord agitating with its furies, even the inhabitants of the cabin ; sedition fanning the devouring flame of war, even in the remote and solitary villages, and the American fields crimsoned with human blood, it is natural to enquire, the cause of all this strange confusion, in this lately peaceful continent, whose docile and benevolent children, had always been an example of mildness and submission, unknown in the histories of other nations.

The ferocious Spaniard, cast on the shores of Columbia, to convert the finest portion of the globe, into a vast and odious empire of cruelty and rapine, in him may your Excellency behold the fatal author of all the tragic scenes we have now to deplore. His entry into the new world, was marked with death and desolation ; he caused its primitive inhabitants to disappear from the face of the earth, and when his savage fury found no more beings to destroy, he turned it against his own children, whom he had in the land he had usurped.

Your Excellency might behold him, thirsting for blood ; condemn things the most holy, and sacrilegiously trample on those engagements which the world venerates, and

which have received the inviolable sanction of all ages and people. A capitulation, last year, delivered up to the Spaniards, all the independent territory of Venezuela; and an absolute and tranquil submission on the part of the inhabitants, convinced them of the pacification of the people, and of the total renunciation they had made, of their late political pretensions. But, at the same time, that Monteverde swore to the people of Venezuela, the religious fulfilment of his offered promises, the most barbarous and impious infraction was seen; the towns were sacked, buildings were burnt; the fair sex outraged; nearly the whole inhabitants of cities shut up in caverns; the imprisonment of an entire people, being for the first time then realized. In fact, none but those obscure victims, who could escape from the sight of the tyrant, preserved their miserable liberty, by hiding themselves in solitary huts, or by living in the woods amidst wild beasts.

How many respectable old men and venerable clergy, were bound in stocks and other infamous fetters, confounded with criminals, and exposed to the scorn of a brutal soldiery, as well as of the vilest of men? How many expired, bent down under the weight of insupportable chains, deprived of air, or starved with hunger or misery? At the time the Spanish constitution was publishing, as a shield to civil liberty, hundreds of victims were dragged away, loaded with chains, to deadly and loathsome vaults, without any cause being assigned for such proceedings, nay, without even the origin or political opinions of the victims, being known.

Your Excellency may here see, the not exaggerated, but unheard of picture of Spanish tyranny in America; a picture, which at the same time, excites feelings of indignation against these executioners, and of the most just and lively sensibility for the victims. Nevertheless, we did not then see, any feeling souls intercede for suffering humanity, nor claim the compliance of a compact, which interested the whole world. Your Excellency at present



interposes your respectable mediation, for the most ferocious monsters, the authors of all these evils. Your Excellency may believe me, when the troops of New Granada, under my command, came to avenge nature and society so much outraged, neither the instructions of the beneficent government of that place, nor my designs, were to exercise the right of reprisal on the Spaniards, who, under the title of insurgents, were carrying all the Americans, worthy of that name, to infamous execution, or to torture still more cruel and infamous. But seeing these tygers sport with our noble clemency, and secure in their impunity, continue, even when conquered, the same sanguinary fierceness, I then, in order to fulfil the holy commission confided to my responsibility, and to save the threatened lives of my fellow-countrymen, made an effort to divest myself of my natural sensibility, and to sacrifice the sentiments of a pernicious clemency, to the safety of my country.

May your Excellency permit me to recommend to you, the perusal of the letter of the ferocious Zerveris, the idol of the Spaniards in Venezuela, to General Monteverde, contained in the Caracas Gazette, No. 3: you will there discover, the sanguinary plans which these wicked people intended to effect. Being informed, before hand, of their sacrilegious intentions, which a cruel experience, immediately afterwards, confirmed, I resolved to carry on a death war, in order to deprive these tyrants, of the incomparable advantage which their destructive system offered.

On my army opening the campaign in the province of Varinas, unfortunately, Colonel Ant<sup>o</sup>ñio Nicolas Briseno, and other officers of distinction, were taken, whom the barbarous and cowardly Tiscar had shot, in the number of sixteen. Similar spectacles, were repeated in Calabozo, Espino, Cumaná, and other provinces, accompanied by such circumstances of inhumanity, that I conceive the repetition of such abominable scenes, unworthy of your Excellency and of this letter.

Your Excellency may see a slight sketch of the ferocious acts, in which Spanish cruelty satiated itself, in the Caracas Gazette, No. 4. The general massacre rigorously committed in the peaceful town of Aragua, by the most brutal of men, the detestable Zuazola, is one of those phrenzied and sanguinary acts of blindness, which have seldom degraded humanity. There were seen, men and women, old and young, with their ears cut off, some skinned alive, and then cast into venomous lakes, or assassinated by painful and slow means. Nature, was even attacked in its most innocent origin, and the unborn, were destroyed in the wombs of their mothers, by blows and stabs of the bayonet.

San Juan de los Moros, an agricultural and innocent town, presented similar spectacles and equally agreeable to the Spaniards, committed by the barbarous Antonanzas and the sanguinary Boves. Still, are there to be seen, in the fields of that unhappy country, the dead bodies suspended on the trees. The genius of crime, there appears to hold his empire of death, to whom no one could approach, without feeling the furies of his implacable vengeance.

But it is not Venezuela, alone, that has been the theatre of these horrid butcheries. The opulent Mexico, Buenos Ayres, and Peru, as well as the unhappy Quito, are scarcely to be compared to any thing else, than to so many vast charnel-houses, where the Spanish government assembles the bones of those, who have fallen under its murdering steel.

Your Excellency may find in Gazette, No. 2, the basis on which a Spaniard founds the honour of his nation. The letter of Father Vicente Marquetich affirms, that the sword of Regules in the field, and on the scaffold, has immolated 12,000 Americans in one year, and shews, that the glory of the navy officer Rosendo Porlier, consists in his universal system of not giving quarter; even to the saints, were they to appear before him in the dress of insurgents.



I refrain from shocking the sensibility of your Excellency, by prolonging the picture of the enormities which Spanish barbarity has committed against humanity, in order to establish an unjust and shameful dominion over the unoffending Americans. Would to God, that an impenetrable veil could hide from the knowledge of man, the excesses of his fellow-beings. Oh! that a cruel necessity did not impose upon us, the inviolable duty of exterminating such treacherous assassins!

Let your Excellency place yourself, for a moment, in our situation, and then ask, what kind of conduct ought to be observed towards our oppressors? Let your Excellency then decide, whether the freedom of America, can ever be secured, as long as such obstinate enemies breathe. Fatal experience, daily urges us to the harshest measures; and even I might add, that humanity itself dictates them. Placed, by my strongest sentiments, under the necessity of being clement with many Spaniards, after having left them amongst us at full liberty, and when their heads were scarcely free from the avenging knife, they have stirred up the unfortunate people, and perhaps, the atrocities recently committed by them, equal the most horrid of the whole. In the valleys of Tuy and Tacats, and in the towns of the West, where one would have thought, that civil war could never have carried its desolating ravages, these wretches have already raised lamentable monuments of their savage cruelty.\* Even women, young children, the aged, have been found skinned, with their eyes and entrails torn out; nay, one would be induced to think, that the tyrants of America were not of the human species.

In vain, would you solicit in favour of those who are now detained in our prisons, passports for your island, or

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\* These circumstances principally allude to the enormities committed by the armed slaves on their masters, whom till now the civil war had scarcely disturbed.

for any other point out of Venèzuela. To the great injury of the public peace, we have already experienced the fatal consequences of this measure ; for we can assert, that almost all who have obtained passports, notwithstanding the oaths by which they were bound, have disembarked on the points in possession of the enemy, in order again to enlist themselves in the parties of assassins, which disturb these defenceless towns. In their very prisons, they are plotting subversive projects, undoubtedly more fatal for themselves, than for a government, obliged to use its efforts, more to repress the fury of the zealous patriots against the seditious who threaten their lives, than to disconcert the black machinations of the former.

Your Excellency may be able to judge, whether the Americans ought to suffer themselves to be patiently exterminated, or whether they are to destroy an iniquitous race, which as long as it breathes is incessantly labouring at our destruction.

Your Excellency is not mistaken in supposing in me, sentiments of compassion ; the same characterise all my countrymen. We could compassionate the Caffres of Africa ; but Spanish tyrants, contrary to the most powerful sentiments of the heart, impel us to reprisals. American justice, will, nevertheless, at all times, know how to distinguish the innocent from the guilty ; and even the latter, shall be treated with all the humanity due to the Spanish nation.

I have the honour to, &c.

(Signed) SIMON BOLIVAR.

To the Governor of Curaçoa, &c. &c. &c.



## No. V.

*Act of Installation of the Second Congress of  
Venezuela.*

IN the City of St. Thomas of Angostura on the fifteenth day of the month of February, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and nineteen, ninth of the independence of Venezuela, at half-past ten in the morning, were assembled in virtue of a summons of the Supreme Chief of the Republic, SIMON BOLIVAR, in the Government Palace, for the Installation of the Sovereign National Congress, convoked by the said Supreme Chief on the twenty-second day of October last.

The Supreme Chief opened the Session with reading a long Speech, the chief object of which was to explain the fundamental principles of the project of a Constitution he presented to the Congress, and to shew that it was the best adapted to our country. He spoke very briefly of his own administration under the most difficult circumstances, intimating that the Secretaries of State would give an account of their respective departments, and exhibit the documents necessary for illustrating the real and actual state of the Republic, and only enlarged when recommending to the Congress the confirmation of the Liberty, granted to the slaves without any restriction whatever—the Institution of the Order of Liberators—and the Law for the division of the National Property amongst the Defenders of the Country, as the only reward for their heroic services. He likewise charged the Congress in the most particular manner to turn its serious attention to the funding of the National Debt, and providing means for its speedy extinction, as was due in gratitude, justice, and honour.

On his Speech being ended, he added, “The Congress of Venezuela is installed,—in it from this moment is centered the National Sovereignty; my sword (grasping

it) and those of my illustrious Fellows-in-Arms are ever ready to maintain its august authority. God save the Congress of Venezuela." At this expression, several times repeated by the crowd, a salute of artillery was fired.

The Supreme Chief then invited the Congress to proceed to the election of an Interim President, that he might deliver up to him his command. The Deputy Francisco Antonio Zea having been elected by acclamation, his Excellency took the oath on the Holy Evangelists, and in which he was followed by all the Members, successively. When his Excellency had taken the oath, he placed the President in the Chair which he had himself occupied under the canopy, and addressing the military, said, "Generals, Chiefs, and Officers, my Fellows-in-Arms, we are nothing more than simple citizens until the Sovereign Congress condescend to employ us in the classes and ranks agreeable to them; reckoning on your submission, I am about to give them, in your names and my own, the most manifest proof of our obedience, by delivering up the command entrusted to me." On saying which he approached the President of the Congress, and presenting his staff of office, continued, "I return to the Republic the General's Staff, entrusted to me—to serve in whatever rank or class the Congress may place me, cannot but be honourable;—in it I shall give an example of that subordination and blind obedience which ought to characterize every Soldier of the Republic." The President, addressing the Congress, said, "The confirmation of all the ranks and offices conferred by his Excellency General Simon Bolivar, during his command, does not appear to admit of any discussion; I however request the express approval of the Congress for declaring it. Is the Congress of opinion that the ranks and offices conferred by his Excellency General Simon Bolivar, as Supreme Chief of the Republic, be confirmed?" All the Deputies standing up, answered YES, and the President continued: "The Sovereign Congress of the Republic confirms in the



person of his Excellency the Captain General Simon Bolivar, all the ranks and offices conferred by him during his Government,"—and returning him the staff, placed him in the seat on his right. After a silence of some moments, the President spoke as follows :—

“The artless splendour of the noble act of patriotism, of which General Bolivar has just given so illustrious and memorable an example, stamps on this solemnity a character of antiquity, and is a presage of the lofty destinies of our country. Neither Rome nor Athens, nor even Sparta, in the purest days of heroism and public virtue, ever presented so sublime and so interesting a scene. The imagination rises in contemplating it, ages and distances disappear, and we think ourselves contemporary with the Aristides, the Phocians, the Camillus, and the Epaminondas of other days. The same philanthropy and the same liberal sentiments which united to the Republican Chiefs of high antiquity, those beneficent Emperors, Vespasian, Titus, Trajan, and Marcus Aurelius, who so worthily trod the same path, will to-day place amongst them this modest General; and with them he will shine in history, and receive the benedictions of posterity. It is not now that the sublime trait of patriotic virtue, which we have witnessed and admire, can be duly appreciated; when our Institutions will have had the sanction of time, when every thing weak, and little in our days, when passions, interests, and vanities will have disappeared, and great deeds and great men alone remain, then the abdication of General Bolivar will receive all the justice it so richly merits, and his name will be mentioned with pride in Venezuela, and with veneration throughout the universe. Forgetting every thing he has achieved for the establishment of our liberties—eight years of affliction and dangers—the sacrifice of his fortune and repose—indescribable fatigues and hardships—exertions of which scarcely a similar example can be quoted from history, that constancy proof against every reverse—that invincible firmness in never despairing of the salvation of our country, even

when he saw her subjugated, and he destitute and alone forgetting, I say, so many claims to immortality, to fix his attention only on what we have seen and admired. If he had renounced the Supreme Authority when it presented nothing but troubles and dangers; when it brought on his head insults and calumnies, and when it appeared nothing more than an empty name, although it would not have been praise-worthy, it would at least have been prudent: but to do it at the very moment when the authority begins to enjoy some attractions in the eyes of ambition, and when every thing forebodes a speedy and fortunate issue to our desires, and to do it of himself, from the pure love of liberty, is a deed so heroic, and so splendid, that I doubt whether it ever had an equal, and despair of its ever being imitated. But what! shall we allow General Bolivar to rise so much above his fellow-citizens, as to oppress them with his glory, and not at least endeavour to compete with him in noble and patriotic sentiments, by not permitting him to quit the precincts of this august assembly without re-investing him with the same authority, which he had relinquished in order to maintain liberty inviolable, but which was in fact the way to risk it?" "No, no," replied General Bolivar, with energy and animation, "never will I take upon me again an authority which from my heart I have renounced for ever on principle and sentiment." He continued explaining the dangers which Liberty would be exposed to, by continuing for a length of time the same man in possession of the chief authority; he shewed the necessity of guarding against the views of every ambitious person, and even against his own, as he could not be sure of always acting and thinking in the same way, and finished his speech with protesting in the strongest and most decisive tone, that in no case, and on no consideration, would he ever accept an authority which he had so sincerely and so cordially renounced, in order to secure to his country the blessings of Liberty. His reply being ended, he begged permission to retire, to which the



President acceded, and appointed a Deputation of ten Members to conduct him.

A discussion then took place in the Congress about the nomination of an Interim President of the Republic, but several difficulties arising in the election, it was agreed that General Bolivar should exercise that power for twenty-four, or at most for eight and forty hours, and a Deputation, with General Marino at their head, was sent to communicate the resolution. General Bolivar replied that it was only in consideration of the urgency of the case, that he accepted the charge, and on the precise condition that it should only be for the time fixed.

This important business being disposed of, and the day far advanced, the Sovereign Congress resolved to meet the following morning at half-past nine, and in a body, accompanied by the Executive Power, the Staff, the Generals, Chiefs and Officers of the Army and Place, to proceed to the Holy Cathedral Church, and return thanks to Almighty God for his mercies in having granted the happy re-assembling of the National Representation, to fix the lot of the Republic by giving it a free Constitution capable of raising her to the height of glory destined for her by nature.

The President declared the Sitting of the Installation of the Sovereign Congress of Venezuela ended, and the Act should be signed by all the Deputies and the Supreme Chief, who had this day laid down his Authority, and that it be countersigned by the Secretary appointed ad interim for that purpose.

[Here follow the signatures of twenty-six Deputies, out of thirty of which the Congress ought to consist, also those of the President and SUPREME CHIEF.]

## No. VI.

*Extracts from the justly celebrated Speech of General Bolivar to the Congress of Venezuela, Feb. 19th, 1819.*

GENTLEMEN,

I ACCOUNT myself one of the beings most favoured by Providence, in having the honour of re-uniting the Representatives of Venezuela in this august Congress; the only source of legitimate authority, the deposit of the sovereign will, and the arbiter of the Nation's fate.

In delivering back to the Representatives of the People the supreme power entrusted to me, I satisfy the desires of my own heart, and calm the wishes of my Fellow-Citizens and of future generations, who hope every thing from your wisdom, rectitude, and prudence. In fulfilling this delightful duty, I free myself from the boundless authority which oppresses me, and also from the unlimited responsibility which weighs on my feeble hands.

An imperative necessity, united to a strongly expressed desire on the part of the People, could have alone induced me to assume the dreadful and dangerous charge of DICTATOR, SUPREME CHIEF OF THE REPUBLIC. Now, however, I respire in returning the authority, which, with such great risk, difficulty and toil, I have maintained amidst as horrible calamities as ever afflicted a social body.

In the epoch during which I presided over the Republic, it was not merely a political storm that raged, in a sanguinary war, in a time of popular anarchy, but the tempest of the desert, a whirlwind of every disorganised element, the bursting of an infernal torrent that overwhelmed the land of Venezuela. A man! and such a man as I am! what



bounds, what resistance, could he oppose to such furious devastation? Amidst that sea of woes and afflictions, I was nothing more than the miserable sport of the revolutionary hurricane, driven to and fro like the wild bird of the Ocean. I could do neither good nor evil; an irresistible power above all human controul directed the march of our fortunes, and for me to pretend to have been the prime mover of the events which have taken place, would be unjust, and would be attaching to myself an importance I do not merit. Do you desire to know the sources from which those occurrences took their rise, and the origin of our present situation? Consult the annals of Spain, of America, and of Venezuela; examine the laws of the Indies, the conduct of your ancient Governors, the influence of Religion, and of foreign Dominion; observe the first Acts of the Republican Government, the ferocity of our enemies, and the national character. I again repeat that I cannot consider myself more than the mere instrument of the great causes which have acted on our Country. My life, my conduct, and all my actions, public and private, are however before the people—and, Representatives, it is your duty to judge them. I submit to your impartial decision, the manner in which I have executed my command, and nothing will I add to excuse—I have already said enough as an apology. Should I merit your approbation, I shall have acquired the sublime title of a GOOD CITIZEN, preferred by me to that of LIBERATOR, bestowed on me by Venezuela; to that of PACIFICATOR, given by Cundinamarca, and to all others the universe could confer!

LEGISLATORS!—I deposit in your hands the Supreme command of Venezuela, and it is now your high duty to consecrate yourselves to the felicity of the Republic; in your hands rest the balance of our destiny, and the means of our glory.—You will confirm the Decrees which establish our Liberty.

The Supreme Chief of the Republic is, at this moment, nothing more than a simple Citizen,—and such he wishes

to remain until his latest hour. He will, however, serve with the armies of Venezuela, as long as an enemy treads her soil.

The continuation of authority in the same individual, has frequently proved the termination of democratical Governments. Repeated elections are essential in popular systems, for nothing is so dangerous as to suffer power to remain a long time vested in one Citizen; the People accustomed to obey, and he to command, give rise to usurpation and tyranny. A strict jealousy is the guarantee of Republican Liberty; and the Citizens of Venezuela ought to fear with the greatest justice, that the same Magistrate who has governed them for a length of time may do so for ever.

Casting a glance on the past, we shall see what is the basis of the Republic of Venezuela.

The separation of America from the Spanish Monarchy resembles the state of the Roman Empire, when that enormous mass fell to pieces in the midst of the ancient world. Every dismemberment then formed an independent nation, conformable to its situation and interests; but with this difference, that those associations returned to their original principles. We do not retain vestiges of what we were in other times; we are not Europeans, we are not Indians, but a middle race betwixt the Aborigines and the Spaniards. Americans by birth, and Europeans in rights, we are placed in the extraordinary predicament of disputing with the natives our privilege of possession, and of maintaining ourselves in the country which gave us birth, against the efforts of the original Invaders—and thus, our situation is the more extraordinary and complicated.

Our lot, moreover, has ever been purely passive, our political existence has ever been nugatory; and we, therefore, encounter greater difficulties in establishing our Liberties, having hitherto been in a lower degree of degradation than even servitude, and being not only robbed of our freedom, but not suffering an active and domineering tyranny, which would have excited feelings of indignation.



Permit me to explain this paradox: in the exercise of authorized absolute power, there are no limits; the will of the Despot is the supreme Law, arbitrarily executed by inferiors, who participate in the organized oppression, in proportion to the authority they hold, being entrusted with all functions, civil, political, military, and religious. America received all from Spain, was without the practice and exercise of an active tyranny, and was not permitted to share in the administration of her domestic concerns and interior arrangements.

This abject state of depression rendered it impossible for us to be acquainted with the course of public affairs, and as little did we enjoy the personal consequence and respect, which the shew of authority commands in the eyes of the people, and which is of such importance in great revolutions. I say again, that we were abstracted and absent from the world in every thing having a reference to the science of Government. The people of America, bound with the triple yoke of ignorance, tyranny, and vice, could not acquire either knowledge, power, or virtue.

Pupils of such pernicious masters—the lessons we received, and the examples we followed—were the most destructive. We were governed more by deceit and treachery, than by force, and were degraded more by vice than superstition. Slavery is the daughter of darkness, and an ignorant person is generally the blind instrument of his own ruin; ambition and intrigue take advantage of the credulity and inexperience of men totally unacquainted with every principle of political and civil economy; the uninformed adopt as realities what are mere illusions, they mistake licentiousness for Liberty, treachery for Patriotism, and revenge for Justice.

A corrupt People, should it gain its liberty, soon loses it again, for in vain are the lights of experience exercised in shewing that happiness consists in the practice of virtue, and that the Government of Laws is more power-

ful than that of Tyrants, because they are more inflexible, and all ought to submit to their wholesome severity; that good morals and not force constitute the pillars of the Law, and that the exercise of Justice is the exercise of Liberty.

Many ancient and modern nations have shaken off oppression, but few of them have known how to enjoy a few precious moments of freedom; very soon have they returned to their former political vices, for the People more frequently than the Government bring on tyranny. The habit of submission renders them insensible to the charms of honour and national prosperity, and leads them to regard with insensibility the glory of being free under the protection of laws dictated by their own will. The history of the world proclaims this dreadful truth.

The Constitution of Venezuela, although founded on the most perfect principles, differed widely from that of America in an essential point, and without doubt the most important. The Congress of Venezuela, like that of America, participates in some of the attributes of the Executive power. But we go further, and subdivide it by committing it to a collective body, and are consequently subject to the inconvenience of making the existence of the Government periodical, of suspending and of dissolving it whenever the Members separate. Our triumvirate is void, as one may say, of unity, duration, and personal responsibility; it is at times destitute of action, it is without perpetual life, real uniformity, and immediate responsibility; and a Government, which does not possess continuance, may be denominated a nullity. Although the powers of the President of the United States are limited by excessive restrictions, he exercises by himself alone all the functions of authority granted him by the Constitution, and there can be no doubt that his Administration must be more uniform, constant, and truly proper, than that of a power divided amongst various individuals, the composition of which cannot but be monstrous.

The Judicial power in Venezuela is similar to that in



America, indefinite in duration, temporary and not perpetual, and it enjoys all the independence necessary.

All the citizens of Venezuela enjoy by the constitution a political equality; and if that equality had not been a dogma in Athens, in France, and in America, we ought to confirm the principle, in order to correct the difference which may apparently exist. **LEGISLATORS**; my opinion is, that the fundamental principle of our system, depends immediately and solely on equality being established and practised in Venezuela. That men are all born with equal rights to the benefits of society, has been sanctioned by almost all the sages of every age; as has also, that all men are not born with equal capacities for the attainment of every rank, as all ought to practise virtue; and all do not so; all ought to be brave, and all are not so; all ought to possess talents, and all do not so. From this arises the real distinction observed amongst individuals of the most liberally established society.

If the principle of political equality be generally acknowledged, not less so is that of physical and moral inequality. It would be an illusion, an absurdity to suppose the contrary. Nature makes men unequal in genius, temperament, strength, and character. Laws correct that difference by placing the individual in society, where education, industry, arts, sciences, and virtues, give a fictitious equality, properly called political and social. The union of all classes in one state is eminently beneficial; and in which diversity is multiplied in proportion to the propagation of the species. By it alone has discord been torn up by the roots, and many jealousies, follies, and prejudices avoided!

The most perfect system of government is that which produces the greatest degree of happiness, of social security, and political stability.

A republican government has been, is, and ought to be that of Venezuela; its basis ought to be the sovereignty of the people, the division of power, civil liberty,

the prohibition of slavery, and the abolition of monarchy and privileges. We want equality for recasting, as I may say, men, political opinions, and public customs. Throwing our sight over the vast field we have to examine, let us fix our attention on the dangers we ought to avoid, and let history guide us in our career.

Passing from ancient to modern times, we find England and France deserving general attention, and giving impressive lessons in every species of government. The revolutions in those two great states, like brilliant meteors, have filled the world with so great a profusion of political light, that every thinking being has learned what are the rights and duties of man: in what the excellency of governments consists, and in what their vices: all know how to appreciate the intrinsic value of the theoretical speculations of modern philosophers and legislators. In short, this star in its brilliant course inflamed even the apathetic Spaniards, who also entering the political whirlwind gave ephemeral proofs of liberty, and have shewn their incapacity of living under the mild dominion of the law, by returning after a short blaze to their original bondage.

Rome and Great Britain are the nations which have most excelled amongst the ancients and moderns. Both were born to command and be free, and yet neither had constitutions modelled in Liberty's most brilliant form, but solid establishments; and on that account therefore I recommend to you, Representatives, the study of the British constitution, which appears to be the one destined to produce the greatest possible effect on the people adopting it; but perfect as it may be, I am very far, at the same time, from proposing a servile imitation of it. When I speak of the British constitution, I refer solely to the democratical part of it; and in truth it may be denominated, a monarchy in system, in which is acknowledged the sovereignty of the people, the division and equilibrium of power, civil freedom, liberty of conscience, and of the press, and every thing that is sublime in politics. A greater degree of liberty cannot be enjoyed in any kind of



republic, and it may indeed claim a higher rank in social order. I recommend that constitution as the best model to those who aspire to the enjoyments of the rights of man, and of all that political felicity compatible with our frail natures.

[Here follows the Supreme's opinion of the advantages likely to accrue from an hereditary senate, together with a recommendation of such a body—perhaps the only part of his admirable discourse that will meet objections amongst his republican friends and admirers in Europe. As the General's observations on our constitution, apply to an administration of it, which a very large majority of the nation do not admit to exist, the Editor has also passed them over.]

Whilst the people of Venezuela exercise the rights they lawfully enjoy—let us moderate the excessive pretensions which an incompetent form of government might suggest—and let us give up that federal system which does not suit us—let us get clear of the triumvirate executive power, and concentrate it in one president, and let us commit to him sufficient authority to enable him to resist the inconveniences arising from our recent situation, from the state of warfare we have been suffering under, and from the kind of foreign and domestic enemies we had to deal with, and with whom we shall still have to contend for a length of time. Let the legislative power resign the attributes belonging to the executive, and acquire nevertheless fresh consistency, and fresh influence in the equilibrium of authority. Let the courts of justice be reformed by the permanency and independence of the judges, by the establishment of juries, and of civil and criminal codes, not dictated by antiquity nor by conquering kings, but by the voice of nature, by the cry of justice, and by the genius of wisdom!

To form a stable government, a national feeling is required, possessing an uniform inclination towards two principal points, regulating public will, and limiting

public authority, the bounds of which are difficult to be assigned, but it may be supposed that the best rule for our direction, is reciprocal restriction and concentration, so that there may be the least friction possible betwixt legitimate will and legitimate power.

Love of country, laws, and magistrates, ought to be the ruling passion in the breast of every republican. Venezuelans love their country but not its laws, because they are bad, and the source of evil; and as little could they respect their magistrates, as the old ones were wicked, and the new ones are hardly known in the career they have commenced. If a sacred respect does not exist for country, laws, and constituted authorities, society is a state of confusion, an abyss, and a conflict of man with man, and of body with body.

To save our incipient republic from such a chaos, all our moral powers will be insufficient, unless we melt the whole people down into one mass; the composition of the government is a whole, the legislation is a whole, and national feeling is a whole. UNITY, UNITY, UNITY, ought to be our device.

Popular education ought to be the first care of the Congress's paternal regard. Morals and knowledge are the cardinal points of a republic, and morals and knowledge are what we most want.

Let us take from Athens her Areopagus, and the guardians of customs and laws;—let us take from Rome her censors and domestic tribunals, and forming a holy alliance of those moral institutions—let us renew on earth the idea of a people not contented with being free and powerful, but which desires also to be virtuous!

Let us take from Sparta her austere establishments, and form from those three springs a reservoir of virtue.

Let us give our republic a fourth power, with authority to preside over the infancy and hearts of men—public spirit, good habits, and republican morality. Let us constitute this Areopagus to watch over the education of youth and national instruction, to purify whatever



may be corrupt in the republic—to impeach ingratitude, egotism, luke-warmness in the country's cause, sloth and idleness, and to pass judgment on the first germs of corruption and pernicious example.

We should correct manners with moral pain, the same as the law punishes crime with corporal, not only what may offend, but what may ridicule, not only what may assault, but what may weaken, and not only what may violate the constitution, but whatever may infringe on public decency.

The jurisdiction of this really sacred tribunal ought to be effective in every thing regarding education and instruction, and only deliberative as to pains and punishments; and thus its annals and records, in which will be inscribed its acts and deliberations, and the moral principles and actions of citizens, will be the registers of virtue and vice. Registers which the people will consult in their elections, the magistrates in their determinations, and the judges in their decisions. Such an institution, however chimerical it may appear, is infinitely easier to realize, than others of less utility to mankind, established by some ancient and modern legislators.

Meditating on the most efficient mode of regenerating the character and habits, which tyranny and war have given us, I have dared to suggest a moral power, drawn from the remote ages of antiquity, and those obsolete laws, which for some time maintained public virtue amongst the Greeks and Romans, and although it may be considered a mere whim of fancy, it is possible, and I flatter myself, that you will not altogether overlook an idea, which, when meliorated by experience and knowledge, may prove of the greatest efficacy.

Terrified at the disunion which has hitherto existed, and must exist amongst us from the subtle spirit characterising the federative system, I have been induced to solicit you to adopt the concentration and union of all the states of Venezuela into one republic, one, and indivisible. A measure, in my opinion, urgent, vital, and saving, and

of such a nature that without it, the fruit of our regeneration would be destruction.

I will not notice the most momentous acts of my command, although they concern most of my countrymen, and will call your attention only to the last memorable revolution. Horrid, atrocious, and impious slavery, covered with her sable mantle the land of Venezuela, and our atmosphere lowered with the dark gloomy clouds of the tempest, threatening a fiery deluge. I implored the protection of the God of nature, and at his Almighty word, the storm was dispelled. The day-star of liberty rose, slavery broke her chains, and Venezuela was surrounded with new and grateful sons, who turned the instruments of her thrall and bondage, into arms of freedom. Yes! those who were formerly slaves, are now free; those who were formerly the enemies of our country, are now its defenders.

I LEAVE TO YOUR SOVEREIGN AUTHORITY THE REFORM OR REPEAL OF ALL MY ORDINANCES, STATUTES, AND DECREES; BUT I IMPORE YOU TO CONFIRM THE COMPLETE EMANCIPATION OF THE SLAVES, AS I WOULD BEG MY LIFE, OR THE SALVATION OF THE REPUBLIC!!!

To exhibit the military history of Venezuela, would be to bring to our recollection the history of republican heroism amongst the ancients; it would shew that Venezuela had made as brilliant sacrifices on the sacred altar of liberty. The noble hearts of our generous warriors, have been filled with those sublime and honourable feelings which have ever been attributed to the benefactors of the human race.

Men who have given up all the benefits and advantages they formerly enjoyed as a proof of their virtue and disinterestedness—men who have undergone every thing horrible in a most inhuman war, suffering the most painful privations, the cruellest anguish—men so deserving of their country, merit the attention of government, and I have therefore given directions to recompense them out of the national property.

Since the second epoch of the republic, our armies



wanted the necessaries of war; they were constantly void of arms and ammunition, and were at all times badly equipped; but at present the brave defenders of independence are not only armed with justice, but with power, and our troops may rank with the choicest in Europe, now that they possess equal means of destruction.

For these important advantages, we are indebted to the unbounded liberality of some generous foreigners, who, hearing the groans of suffering humanity, and seeing the cause of freedom, reason, and justice, ready to sink, could not remain quiet, but flew to our succour with their munificent aid and protection, and furnished the republic with every thing needful to cause the triumph of their philanthropical principles. Those friends of mankind are the guardian geniuses of America, and to them we owe a debt of eternal gratitude, as well as a religious fulfilment of the several obligations contracted with them. The national debt, Legislators, is the deposit of the good faith, the honour, and the gratitude of Venezuela: respect it as the holy ark which encloses not only the rights of our benefactors, but the glory of our fidelity. Let us perish rather than fail, in any the smallest point, in the completion of those engagements, which have been the salvation of our country, and of the lives of her sons.

The union of New Grenada, and Venezuela, in one great state, has uniformly been the ardent wish of the people and governments of these republics. The fortune of war has effected this junction, so much desired by every American, and in fact we are incorporated. These sister-nations have entrusted to you their interests, rights, and destinies. In contemplating the union of this immense district, my mind rises with delight to the stupendous height necessary for viewing properly so wonderful a picture.

LEGISLATORS!—Condescend to receive with indulgence the declaration of my political creed; the highest wishes of my heart and earnest petition, which in the name of the people, I have dared to address you.

Vouchsafe to grant to Venezuela a government purely popular, purely just, and purely moral, which will enchain oppression, anarchy, and crime. A government which will cause innocency, philanthropy, and peace to reign. A government which, under the dominion of inexorable laws, will cause equality and liberty to triumph!!!

GENTLEMEN!—Commence your duties, I have finished mine.

GOD SAVE THE CONGRESS!

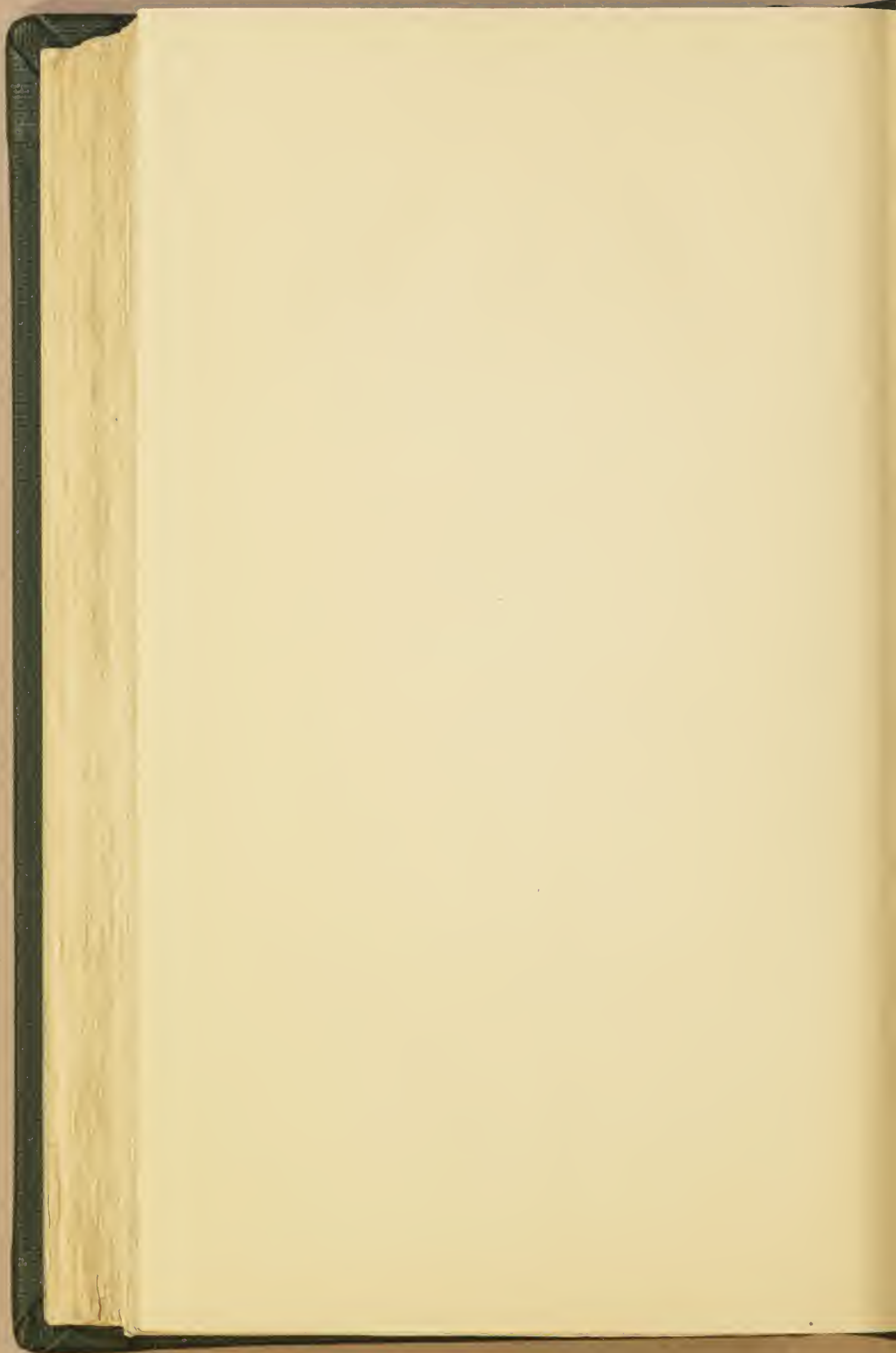
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